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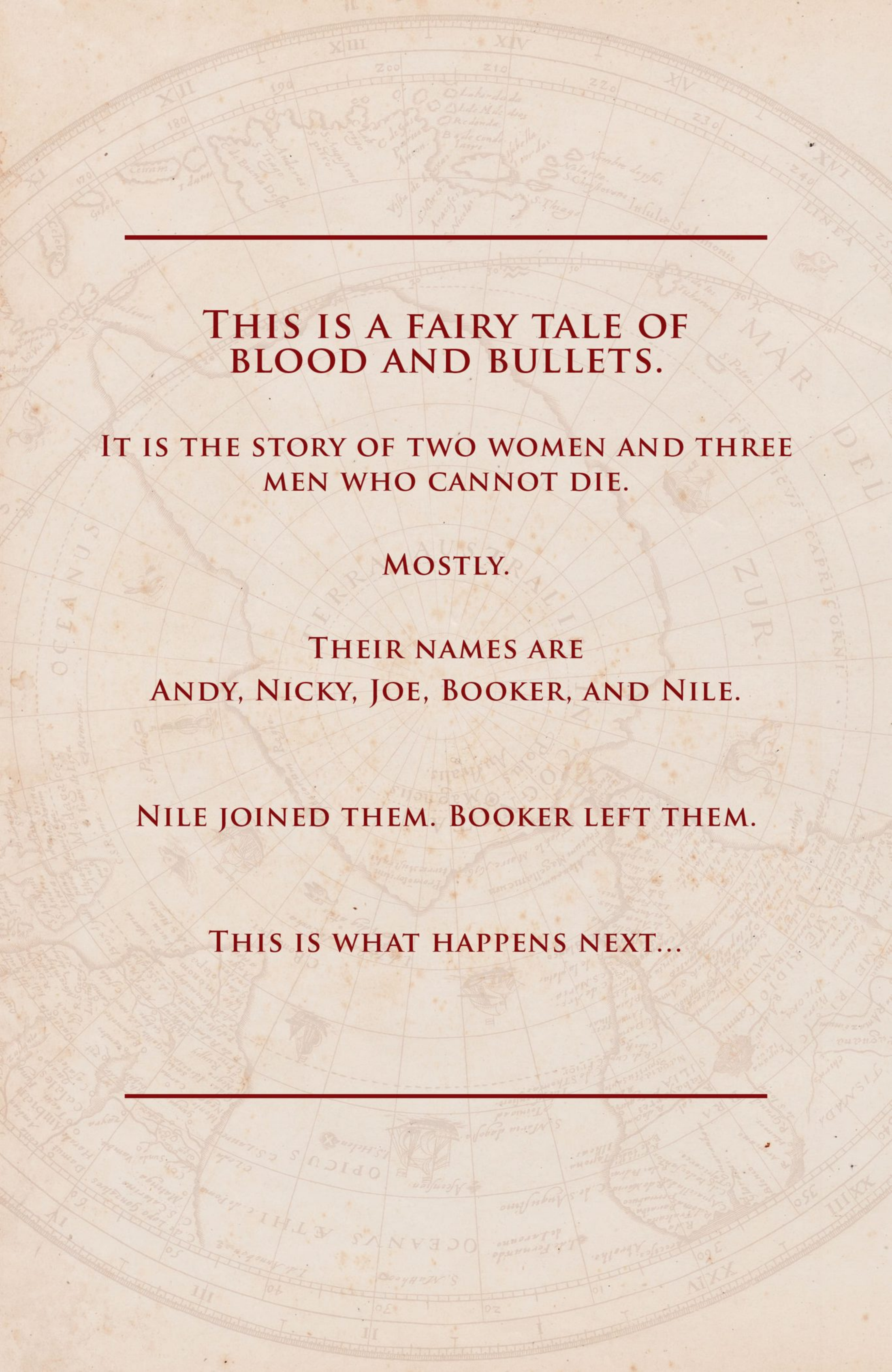
BOOK ONE NOW
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RUCKA › FERNÁNDEZ › MIWA › WYNNE

THE OLD GUARD™

BOOK TWO: FORCE MULTIPLIED

LEAH FERNÁNDEZ
DANIELA MIWA



THIS IS A FAIRY TALE OF
BLOOD AND BULLETS.

IT IS THE STORY OF TWO WOMEN AND THREE
MEN WHO CANNOT DIE.

MOSTLY.

THEIR NAMES ARE
ANDY, NICKY, JOE, BOOKER, AND NILE.

NILE JOINED THEM. BOOKER LEFT THEM.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...



LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ

THE OLD GUARD™

BOOK TWO: FORCE MULTIPLIED

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Daniela
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CHAPTER ONE

SOMEWHERE IN CENTRAL EURASIA.

6700 YEARS AGO.

(GIVE OR TAKE.)

What is it they say
about your *first time*?

You can *never* forget it?

They're right.

You can't...



...no matter
how hard you
might try.



The thing about **battle...**



...it makes
things **easy.**



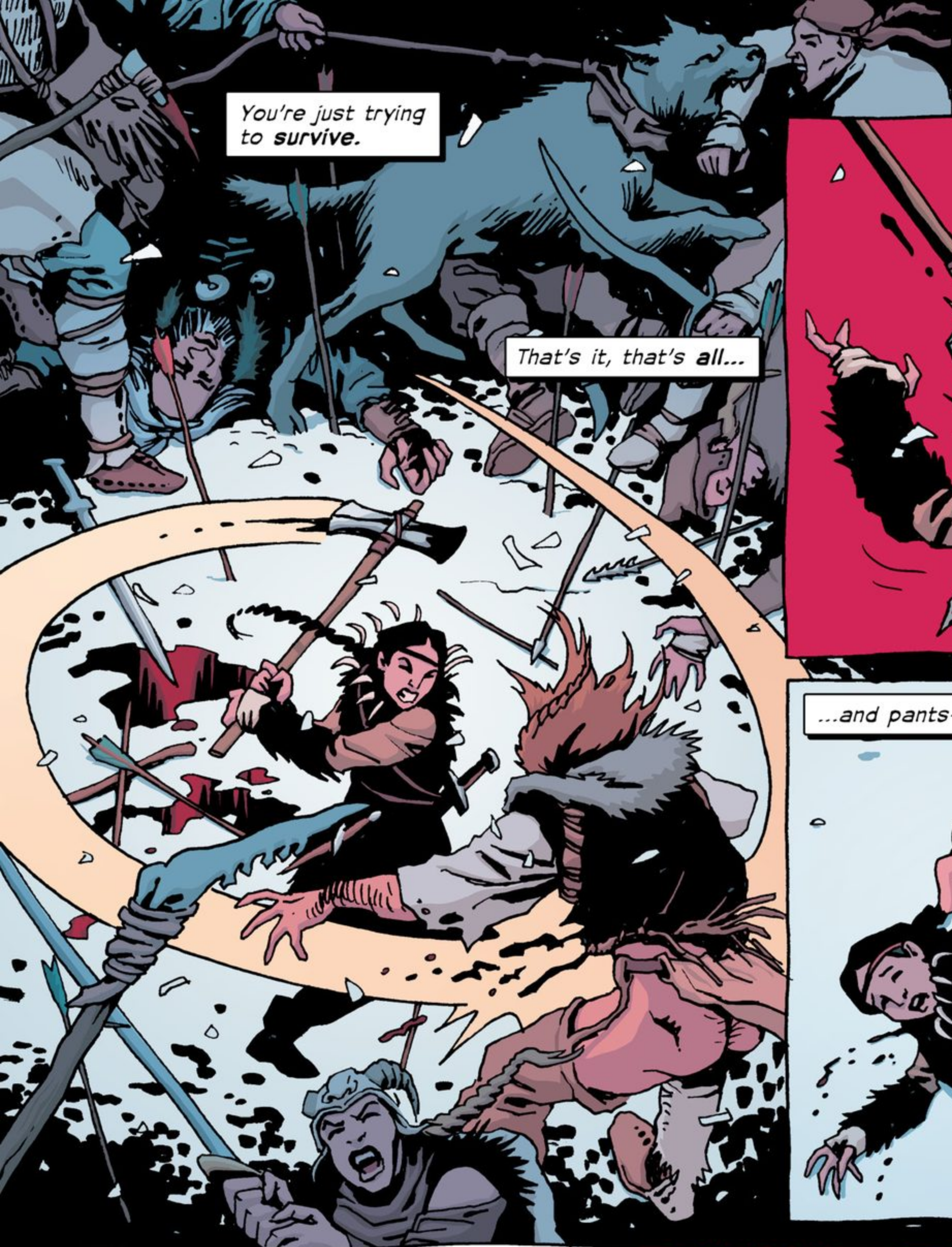
You don't worry about
right or wrong.



You just don't get the **luxury.**



You just don't have the **time.**



You're just trying to survive.

That's it, that's all...



...just red-vision rage...



...and pants-shitting fear.



Because you don't want to die.



THW!



That's the *first* time.



And when it's over, you're left with **everything** you felt.



Everything you did.



And you feel **ashamed**.

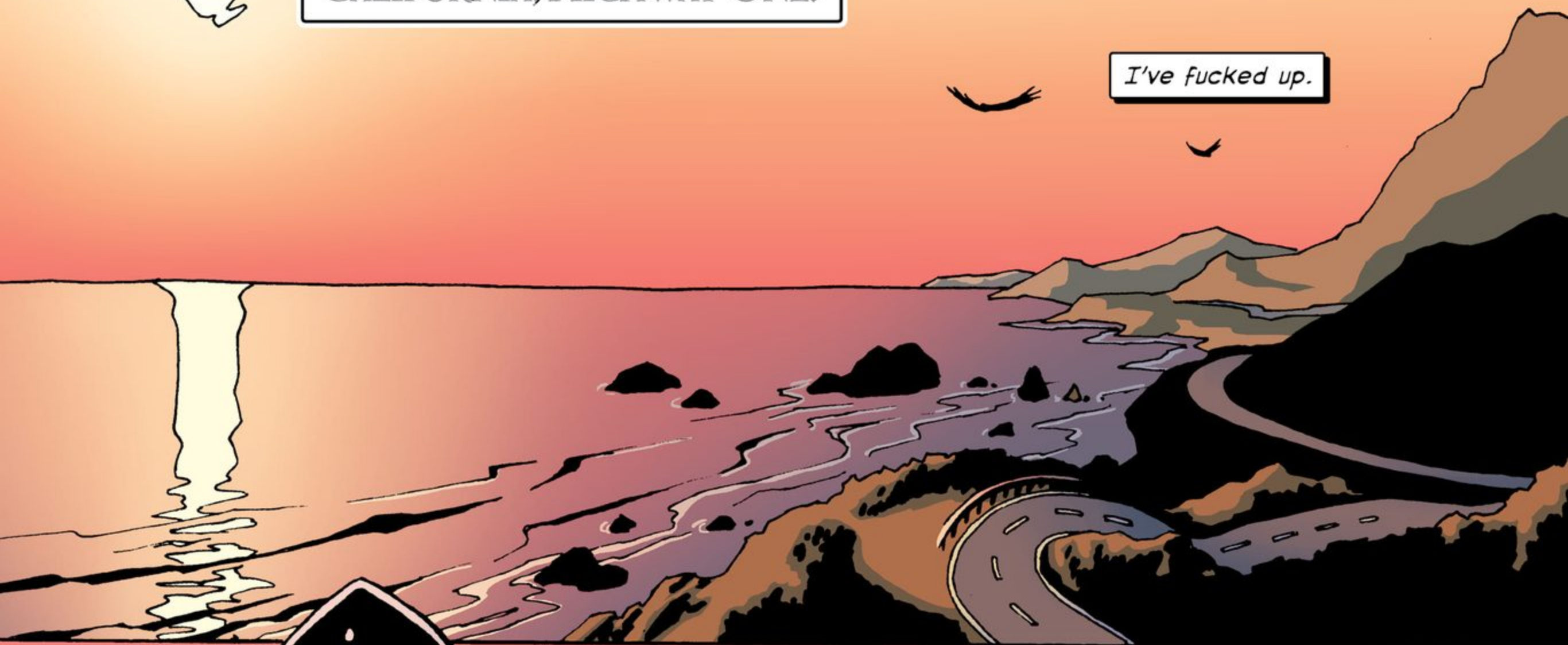


And that makes you **angry**.



CALIFORNIA, HIGHWAY ONE.

I've fucked up.



A lot.

Admittedly, at six and a half thousand years old, you'd **expect** that.



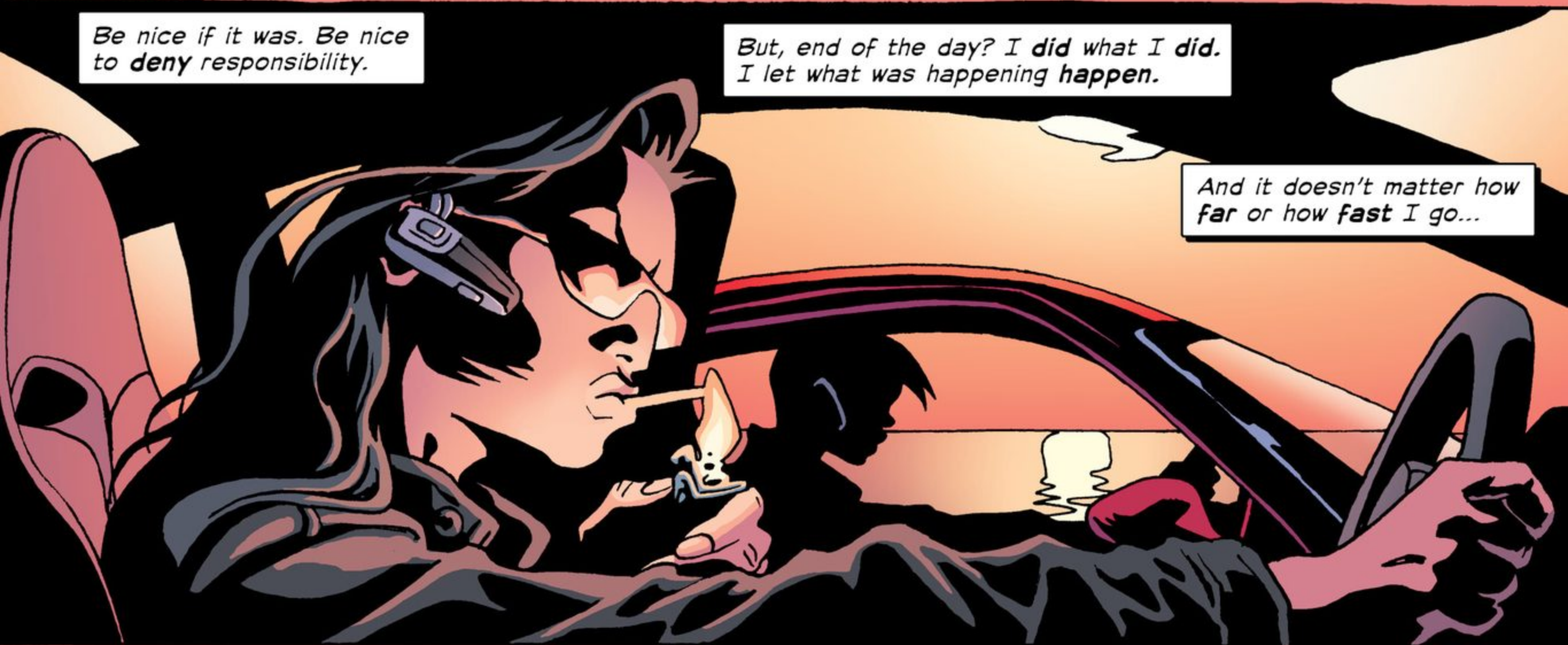
But that ain't an **excuse**.

Just like saying that it was the **time** or the **culture** or the **people** isn't an excuse.

Be nice if it was. Be nice to **deny** responsibility.

But, end of the day? I **did** what I **did**. I let what was happening **happen**.

And it doesn't matter how **far** or how **fast** I go...

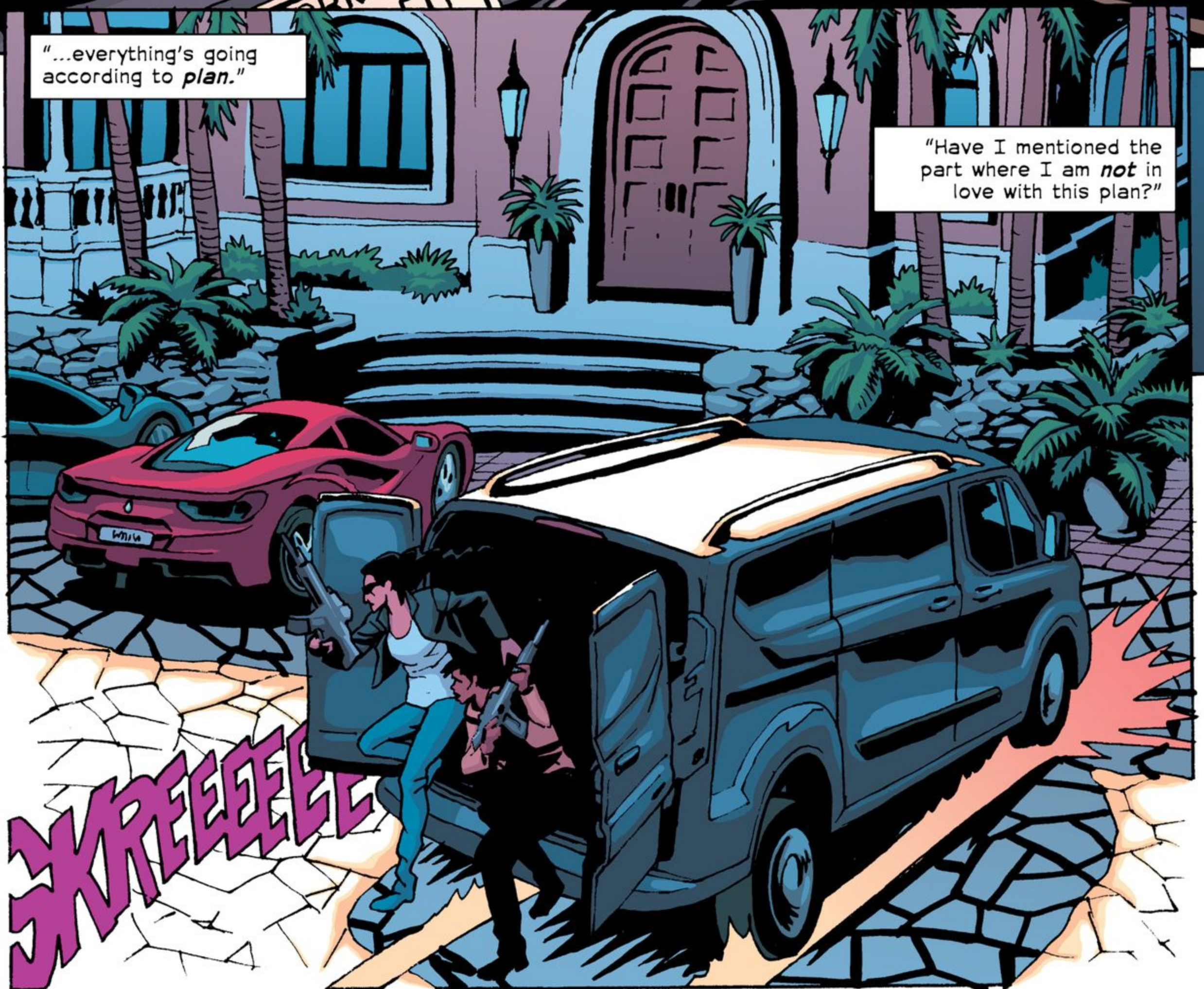


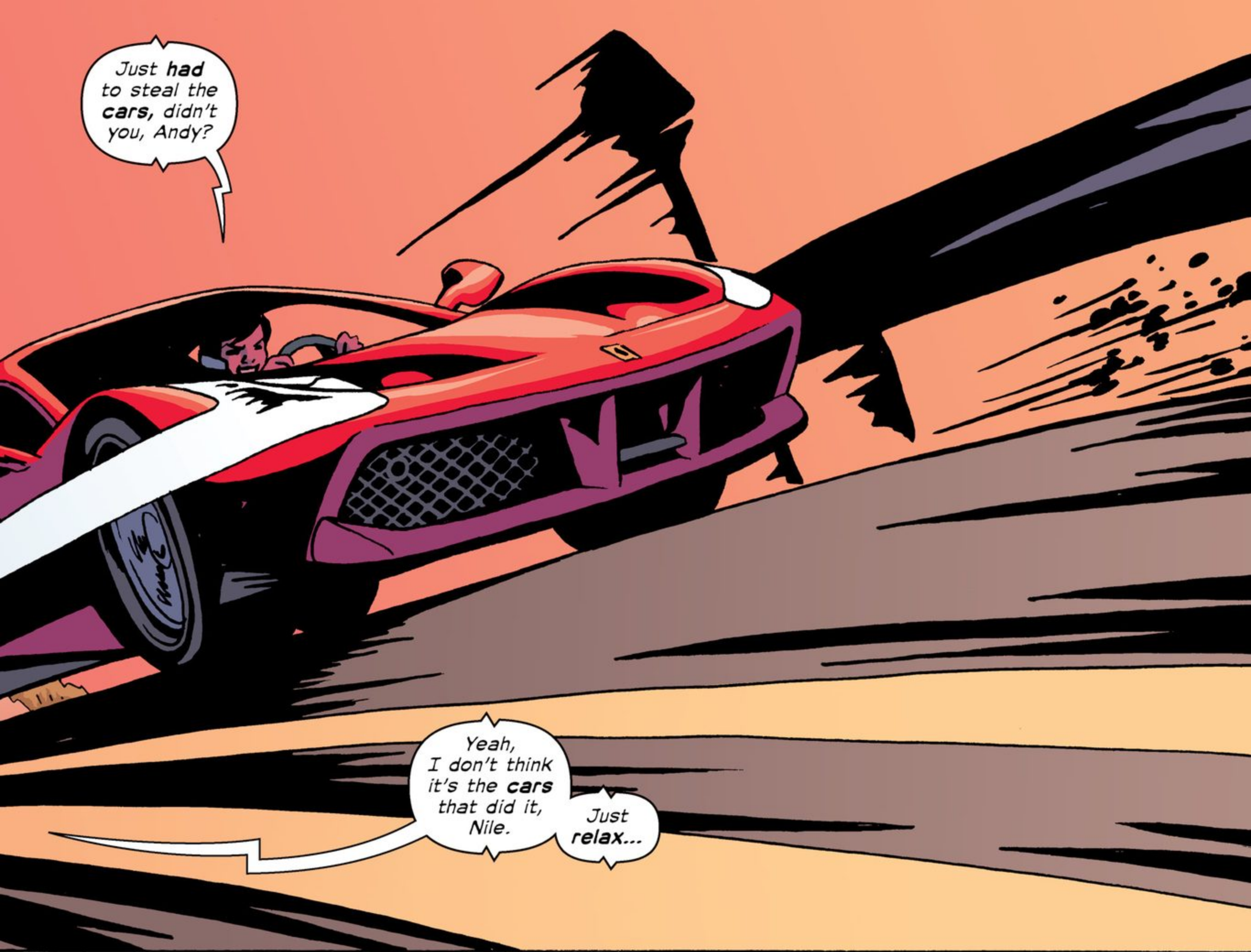
...it **all** catches up
with you in the **end**.



"...everything's going
according to **plan**."

"Have I mentioned the
part where I am **not** in
love with this plan?"





Just **had**
to steal the
cars, didn't
you, Andy?

Yeah,
I don't think
it's the **cars**
that did it,
Nile.

Just
relax...



"Several times, yes, Nile."

We get choices.



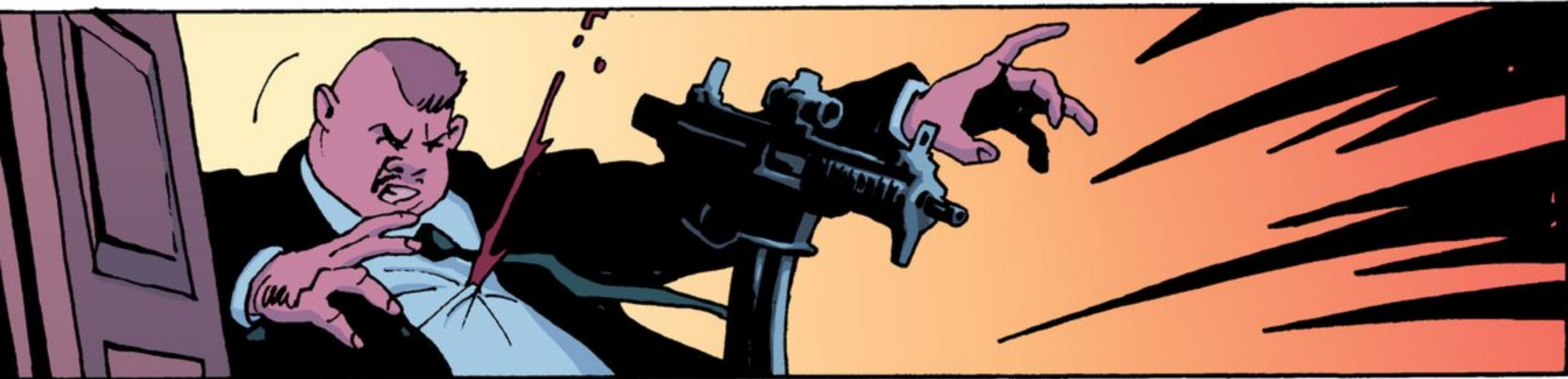
We can try to *atone*, try to make right...



...or we can *ignore* who's looking back at us in the mirror.



Some people are good at that.



Here's the thing
about power:

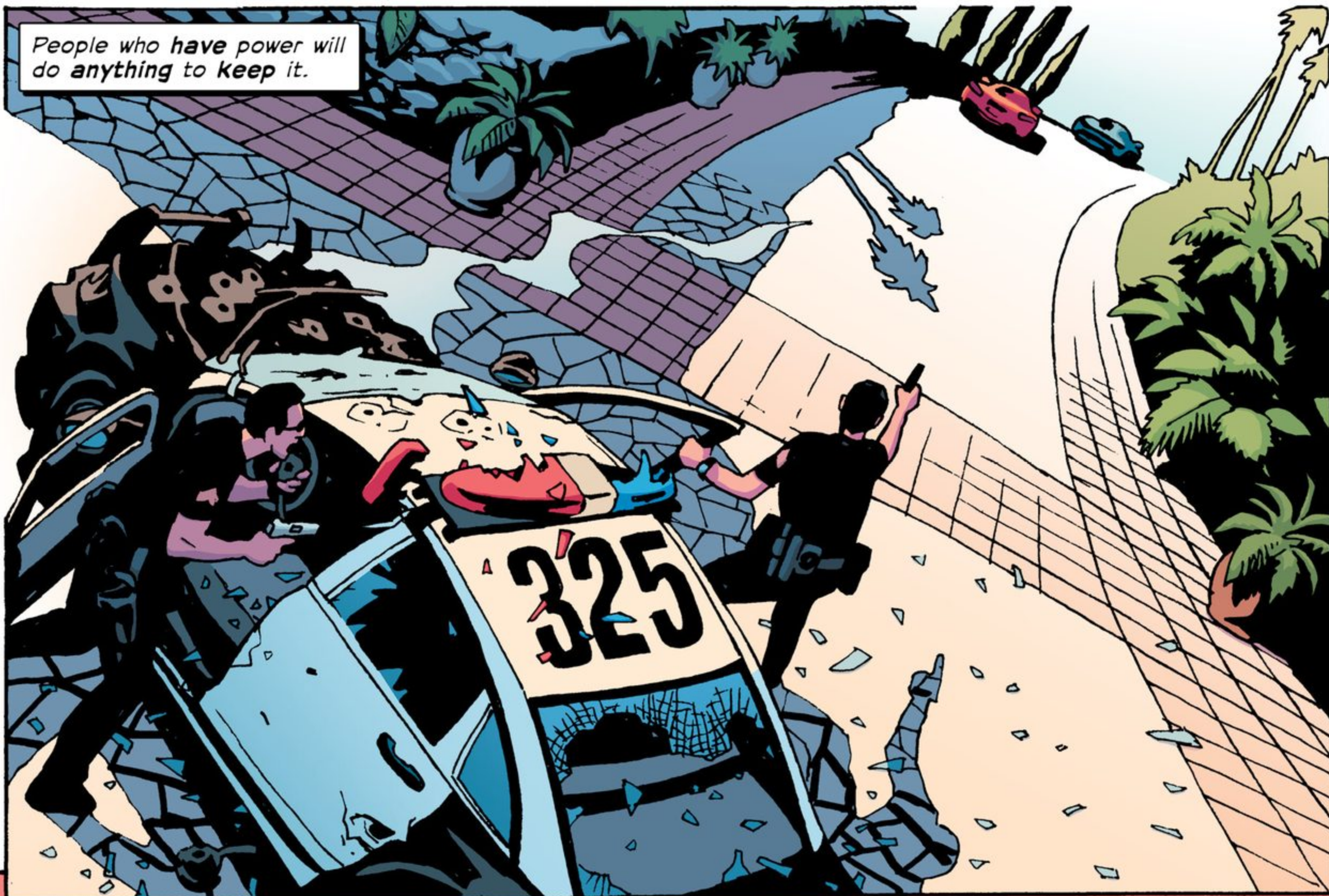


People who **have** it
believe they **deserve** it.



And so they believe those
who **don't** deserve whatever
happens to them.





...it's
what's in *front*
of us.

Was
wondering
what happened
to all the
traffic.



We'll do it
once we *cross*
the bridge.

This
is gonna
suck.



What was
that?

Nothing.



Okay...

...now!









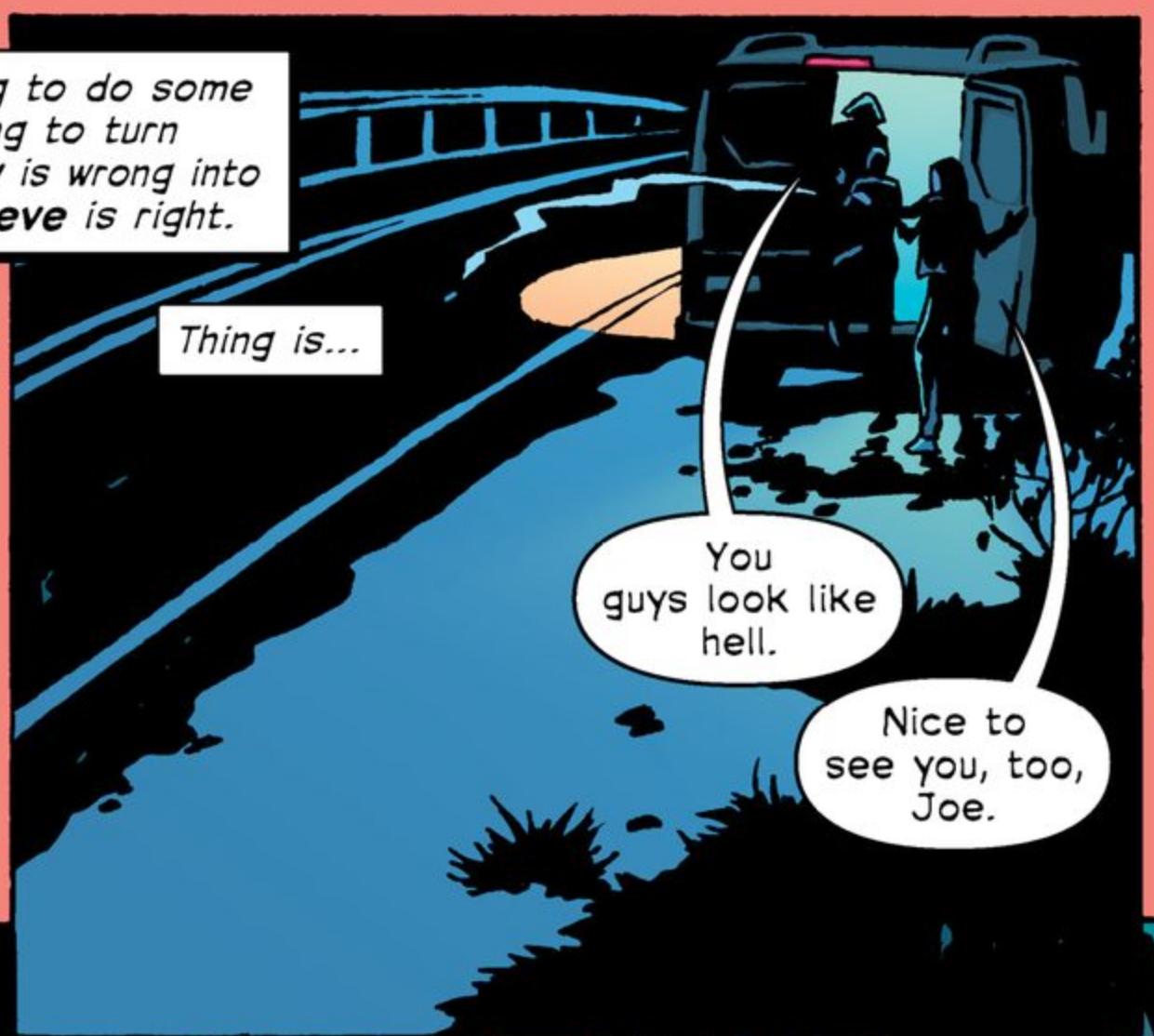
It's *always* easier to just *ignore* your *sins* than to *confront* them.



After all, it takes a *special* kind of asshole to be *proud* of doing the *wrong* thing.



You gotta be willing to do some *heavy* fucking lifting to turn something you *know* is wrong into something you *believe* is right.



Thing is...

You guys look like hell.

Nice to see you, too, Joe.



...there's *plenty* of folks who are willing to do *that* work, too.

Any trouble?

None. Your little *distraction* worked like a *charm*.



WHUMP
WHUMP

Where to *next*?



Keep *following* the *chain*...

MARSEILLE.

"...eventually we'll reach the *top*...."





Nom de Dieu.











I was hoping we could *avoid* this...



...but you are leaving me *little* by way of *choice*.

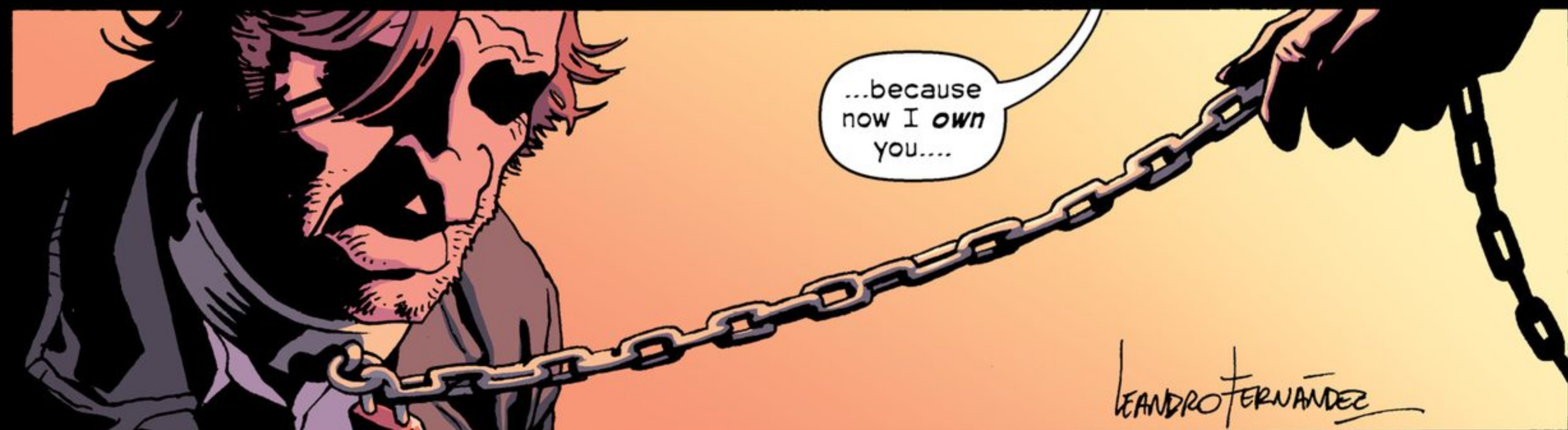
I *don't* know--



So you have said, but I believe you are *lying*.



You *will* tell me *everything* I want to *know*...



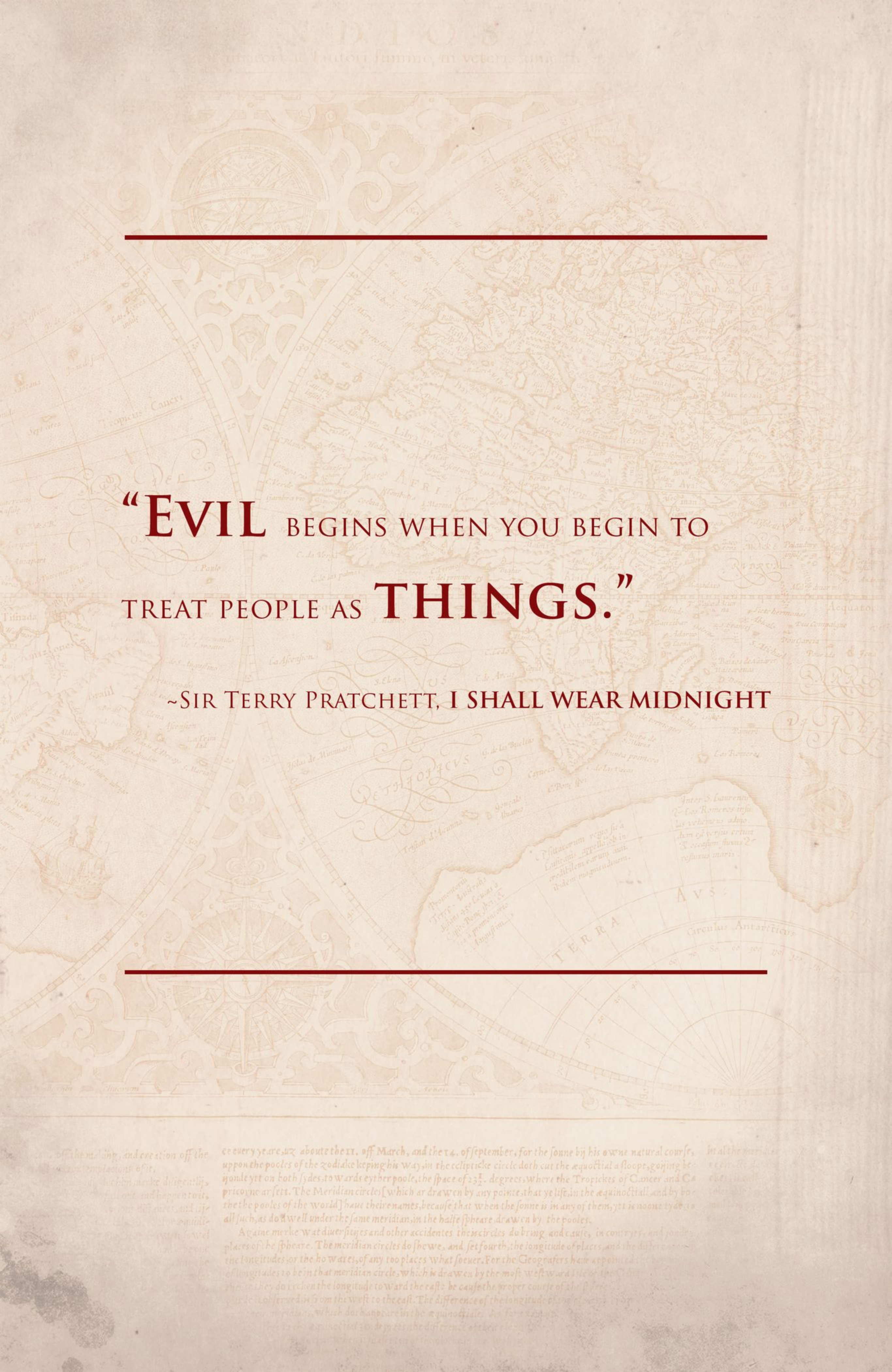
...because now I *own* you....

LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ



LEANDRO FERNANDEZ
Daniela
Mina

CHAPTER TWO



“EVIL BEGINS WHEN YOU BEGIN TO
TREAT PEOPLE AS THINGS.”

~SIR TERRY PRATCHETT, I SHALL WEAR MIDNIGHT



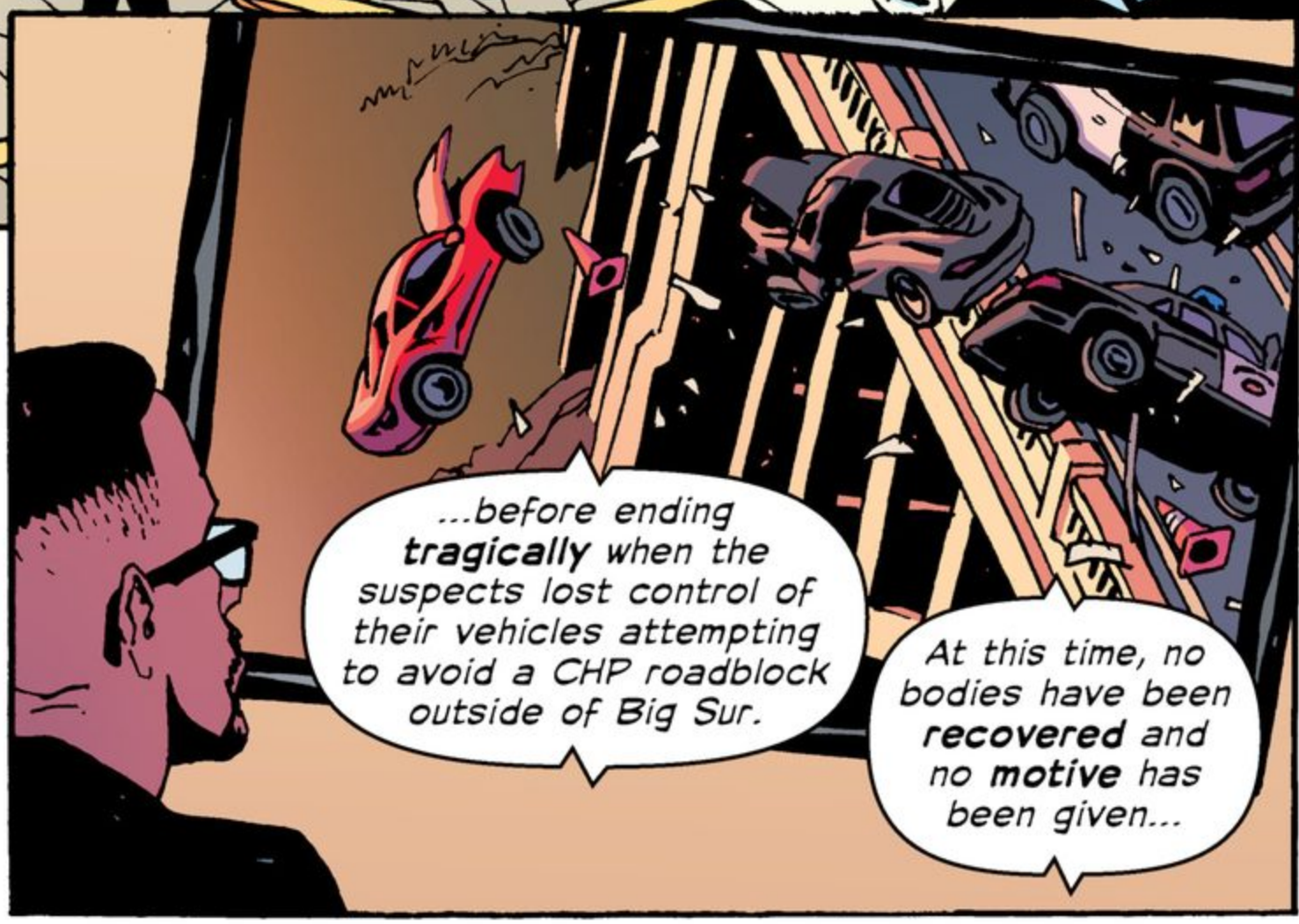
--firefight yesterday outside a luxury Malibu mansion that left eight dead.

Police responding to the incident exchanged gunfire with two suspects fleeing the scene.

No officers were injured in the fight.

The suspects then fled in two high-performance sports cars stolen from the home.

The ensuing pursuit lasted several hours, with local and state authorities giving chase...



...before ending tragically when the suspects lost control of their vehicles attempting to avoid a CHP roadblock outside of Big Sur.

At this time, no bodies have been recovered and no motive has been given...



...though sources speaking off the record have indicated a possible connection to organized crime.

Tech stocks took a nosedive today...



Moose? Heading out?



Grabbing an early dinner...



...see you tomorrow, Reilly....





Excuse me, miss?

Miss?

Miss!

Not cool, man.

Three times we've done this. *Different* restaurant every time.

I show up, you finish your drink, you *go*.

You're forgetting an *important* part.

I'm *not* forgetting it, I'm just not *highlighting* it.

You think I don't have *questions* for you, you're *crazy*.

I steered you wrong yet?

Not *once*.

But you want *more*.

Of course I want more.

Your *name* would be *nice*. I mean, you already know *mine*....



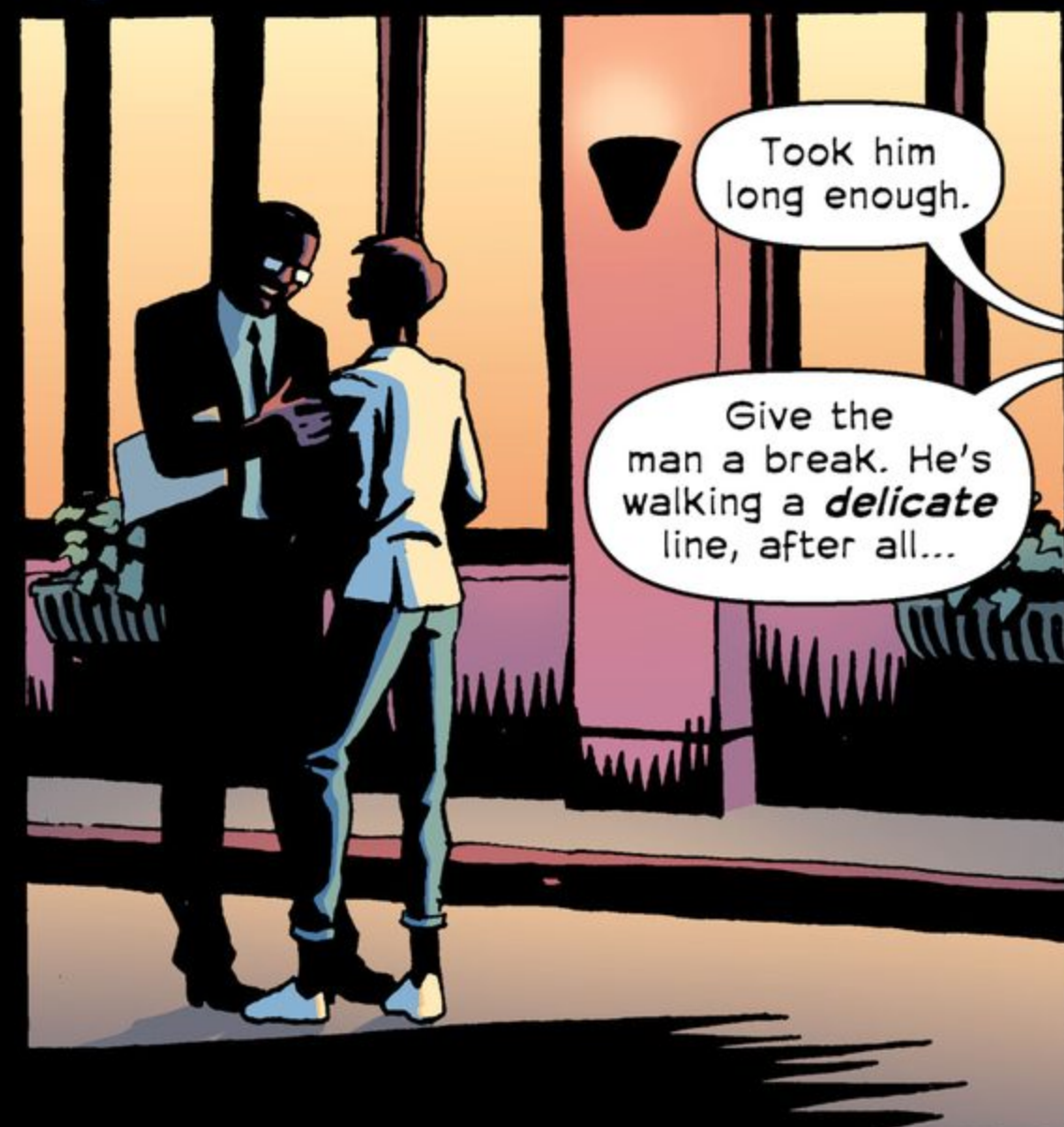
You seeing that?



I am definitely seeing that.

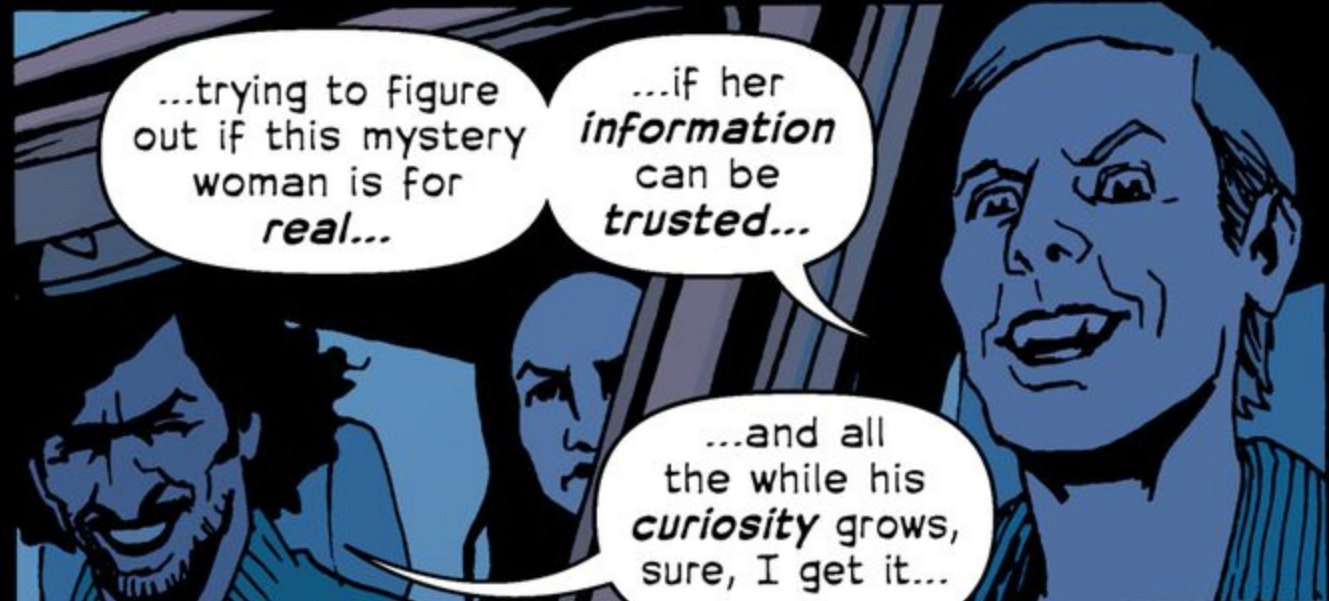
Fifty says she has dinner with him.

Sucker's bet, my heart.



Took him long enough.

Give the man a break. He's walking a *delicate* line, after all...



...trying to figure out if this mystery woman is for *real*...

...if her *information* can be *trusted*...

...and all the while his *curiosity* grows, sure, I get it...



...the *stew* of *romance* begins to *bubble*.



...*stew* of *romance*?

Sure.

Stew, Yusuf? *Really*?

I like a good *stew*, *Nicolo*.

Right...



...that's *enough* of that.

Boss?



I am going to give her *such* a spanking.



Boss! Slow down!

Andy, c'mon. *Where's* the harm?



Right *there*, Nicky! *There* is the harm!

She's *still* a *baby*! She doesn't *understand*!



It's *not* a lesson any of us can *teach* her...

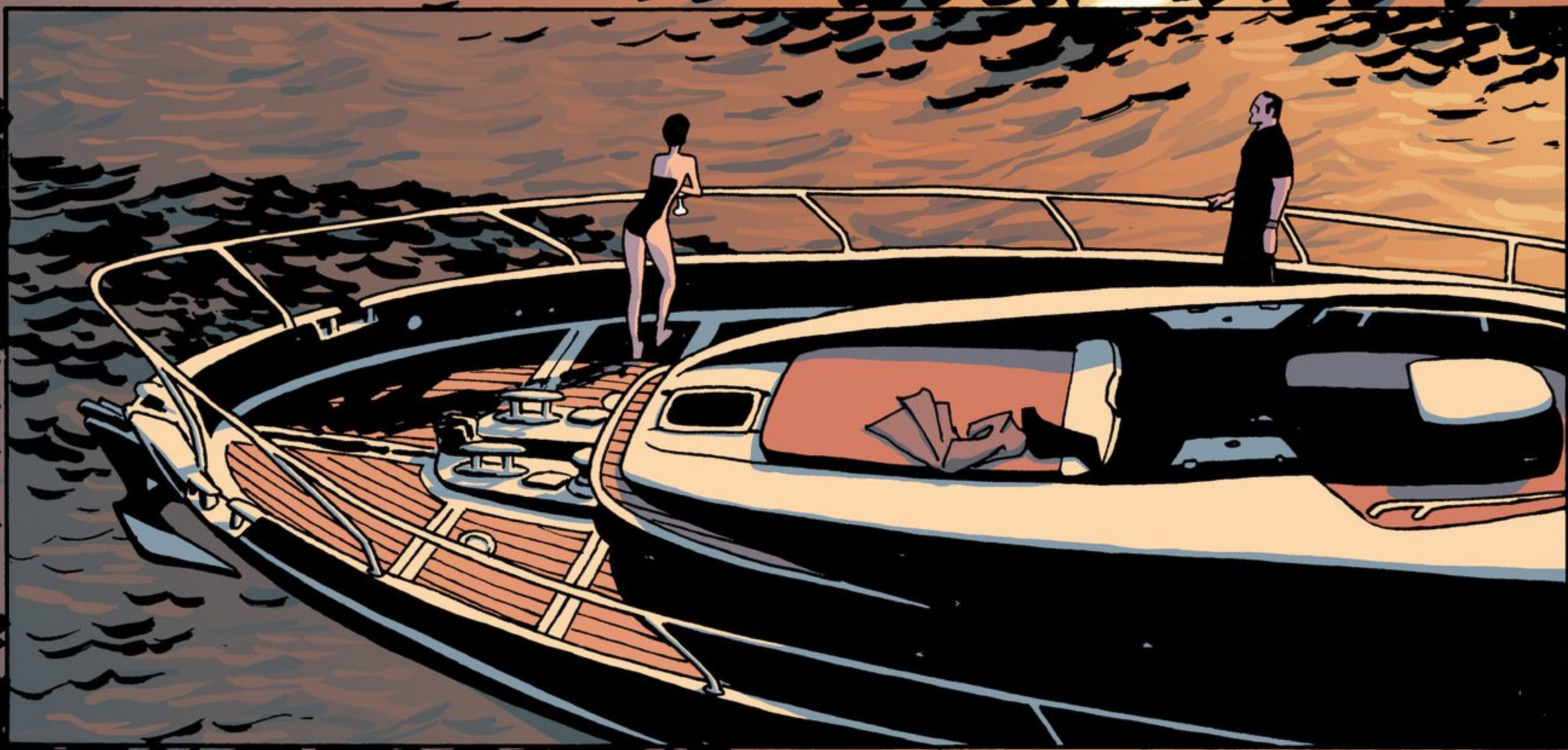
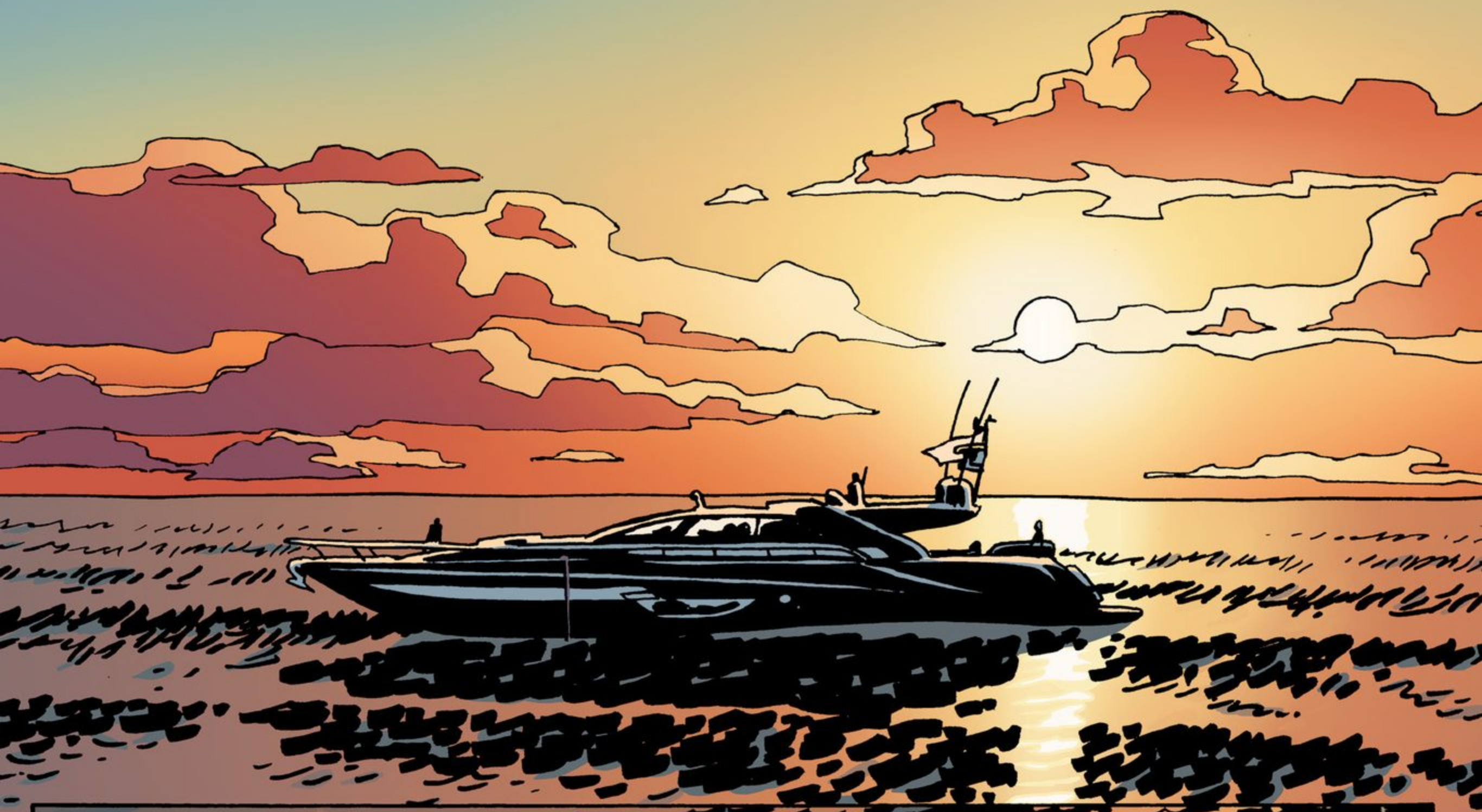


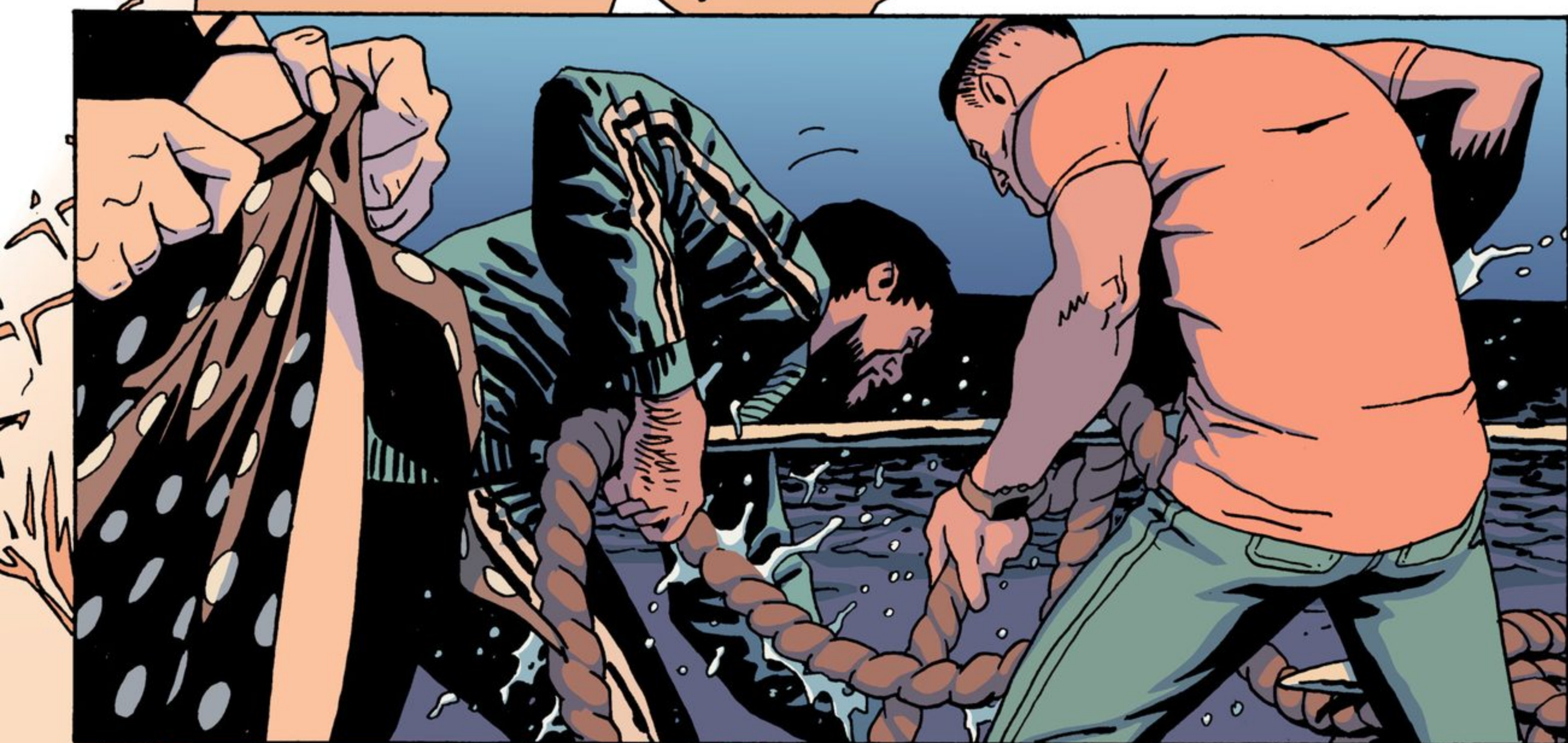
She's got to learn it *herself*.



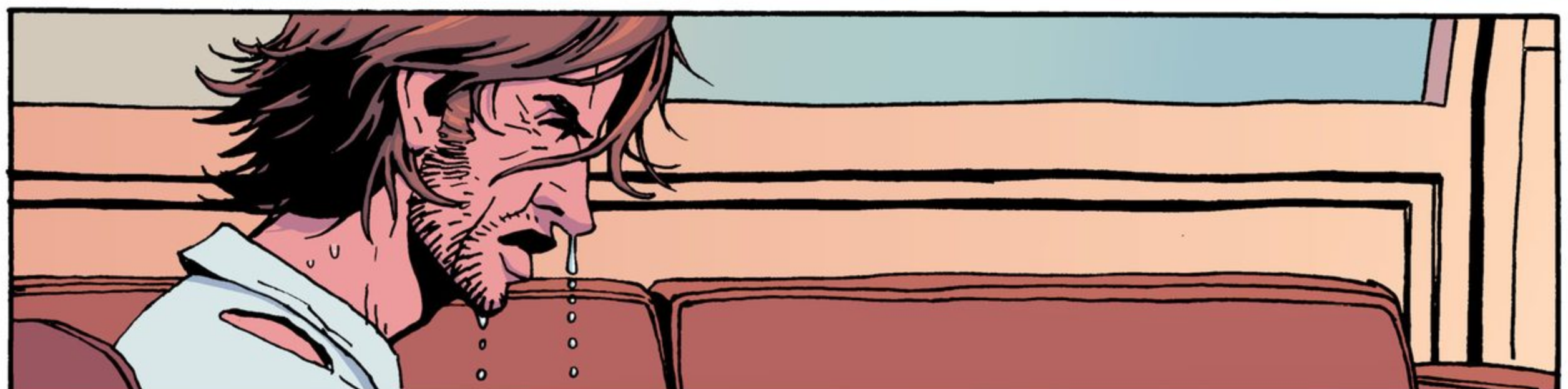
I need a fucking *drink*.

THE MEDITERRANEAN, 40 KM NNE OF CORSICA.



















You guys left.

Sure.

You knew where to find us.



Nice dinner?

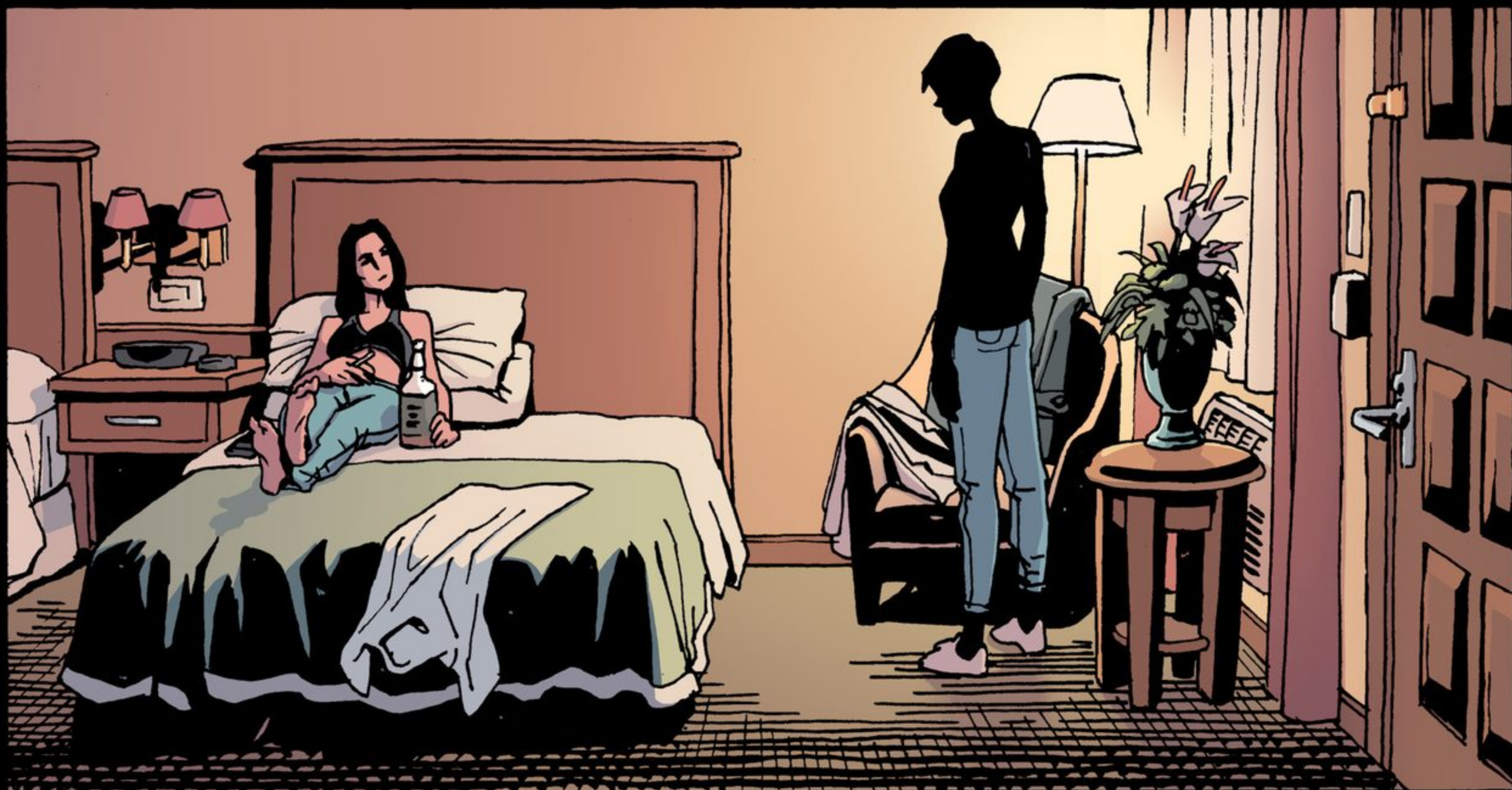
Mhm?

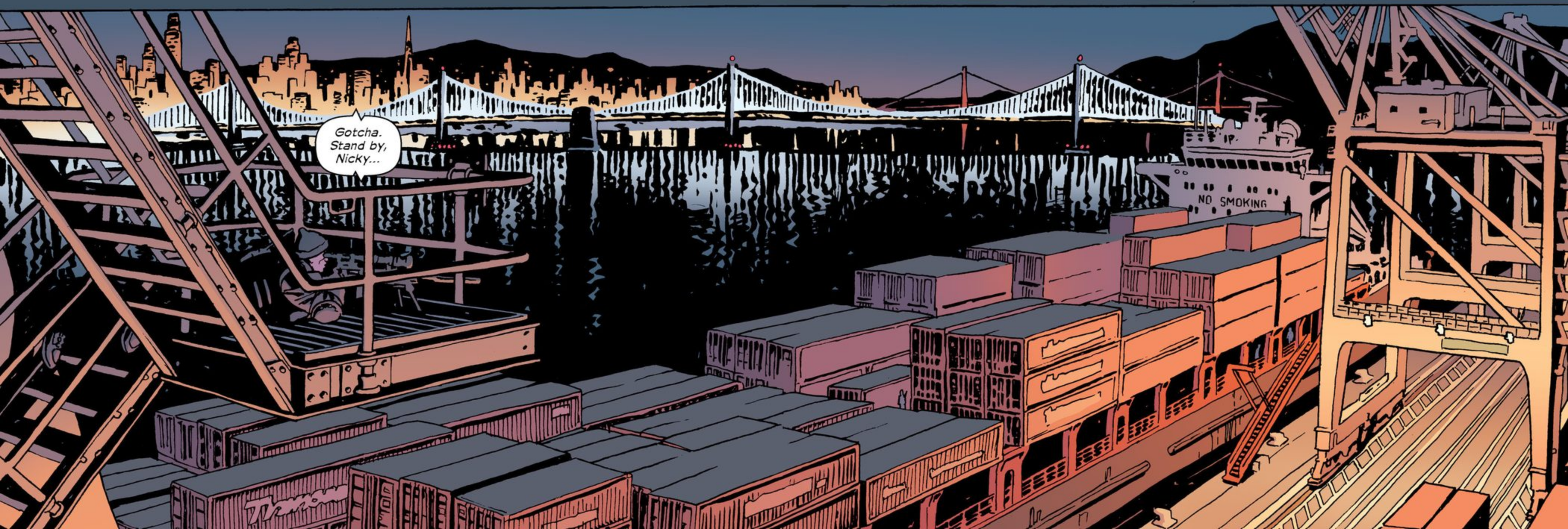
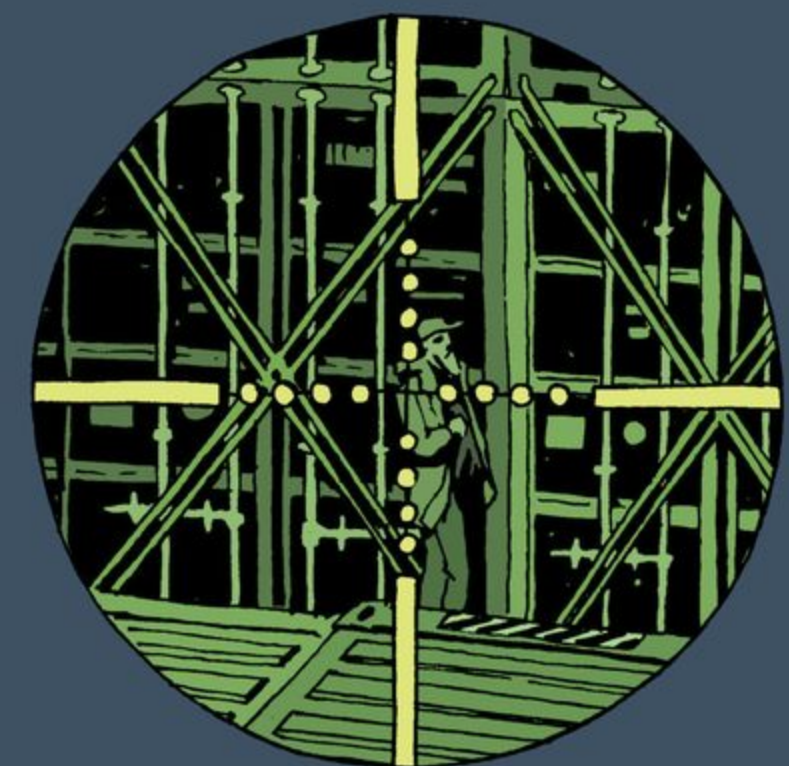


You and Special Agent Cute Ass have a nice dinner?



We have a problem, Andy?







...we're in *position*.

We just rolling in and *wasting* these guys?



They traffic in *human beings*, Nile...



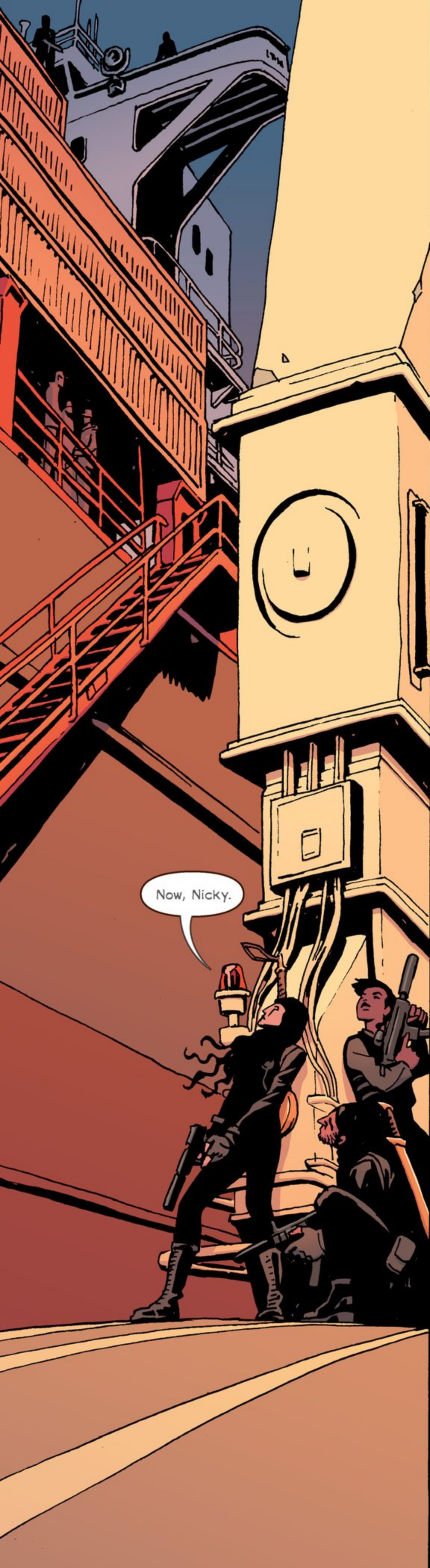
...they're *slavers*...



...fuckers deserve *everything* they've got *coming* to them.



Let's *do* it.





Did you hear...?

Yeah, something.



Just a sec--



thwack

thwack



Mother fu--







Targets
down.



Confirmed.

Looks
clear.



thupp!

klink!



Nile,
gimme a
hand.

Roger
that.



scrkrkrkrkr

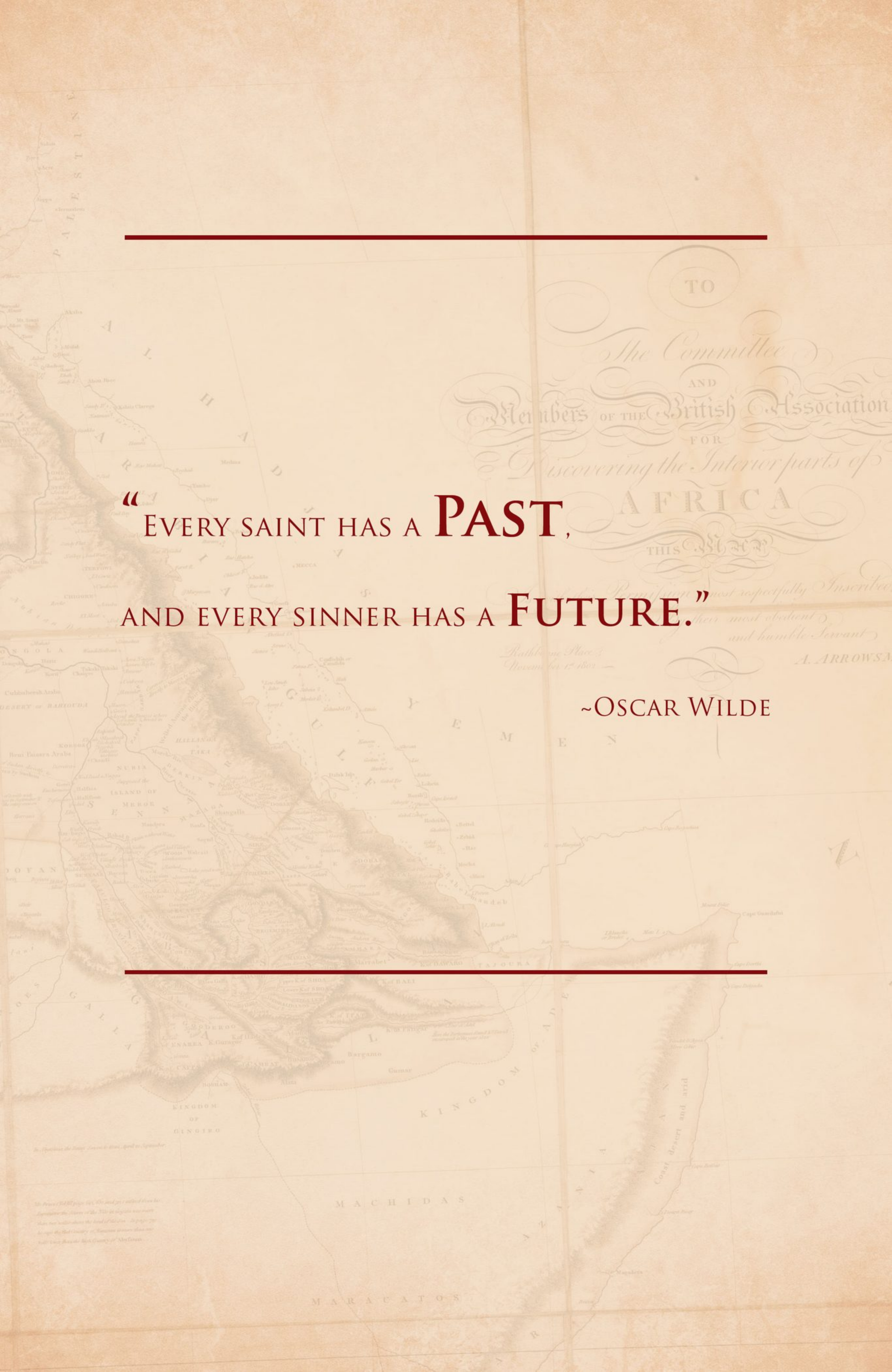


Hello,
Andromache.





CHAPTER THREE



“EVERY SAINT HAS A PAST,
AND EVERY SINNER HAS A FUTURE.”

~OSCAR WILDE

Once upon a time, the **world** was where your feet could **carry** you. That was it.

Then came **beasts** of **burden** and the world got **larger**. For a given value of **large**, of course.

Then there were **boats**. But boats were **risky**.



You had to stay in sight of **land** or risk being **lost** at **sea**--which was **legit**--or "falling off the **edge** of the **world**"--which **wasn't**.

Boats led to **ships** which led to **science** and **navigation** and the whole world opened up.

(Before **Eratosthenes** was **born** there was at least an **excuse** for that kind of **nonsense**. These days? Don't get me started.)

(Also: **Eratosthenes** was **totally** hot.)

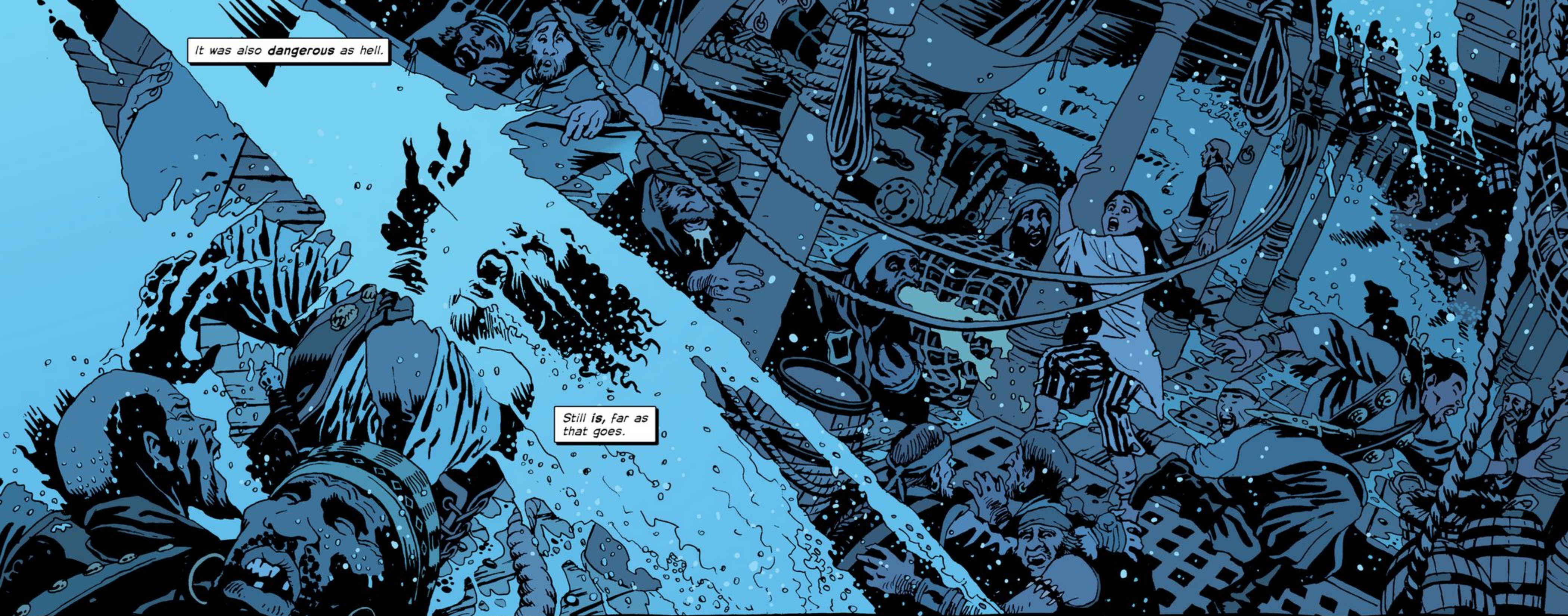


Yo-ho-ho and all that.

You can't **imagine** what it was like.



It was a whole new freedom.



It was also **dangerous** as hell.

Still **is**, far as that goes.



But back then, you risked your life every time you went to **sea**.

For people like us, we risked **more**.



We tell ourselves that we're **immortal**, but that's not strictly true.

We can die. We just don't know how or when or why it'll happen.

But even knowing that, there's not a lot that **scars** us.

The *ocean* scares us.



The *ocean* keeps
its *dead*.



Imagine what it does to
those it **cannot** kill.





Her name was Noriko.

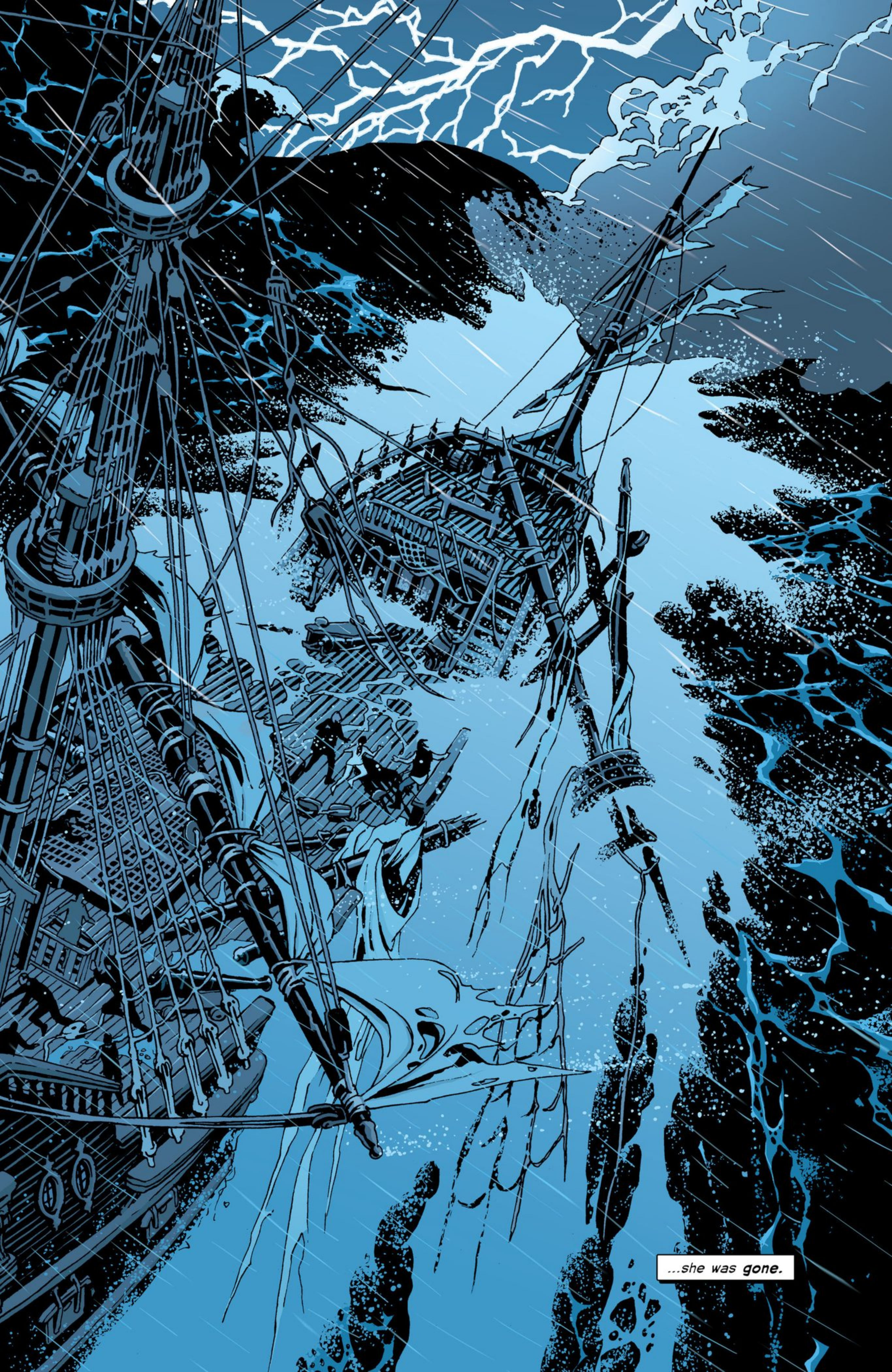


*We walked the world
together for almost
two millennia.*



I loved her.

And just like that...



...she was gone.

Or so I thought.

...Riko?

Kinda went
for the *dramatic*
entrance,
sorry.

Couldn't
resist.

Merciful
Allah...

...Noriko,
is it *you*?

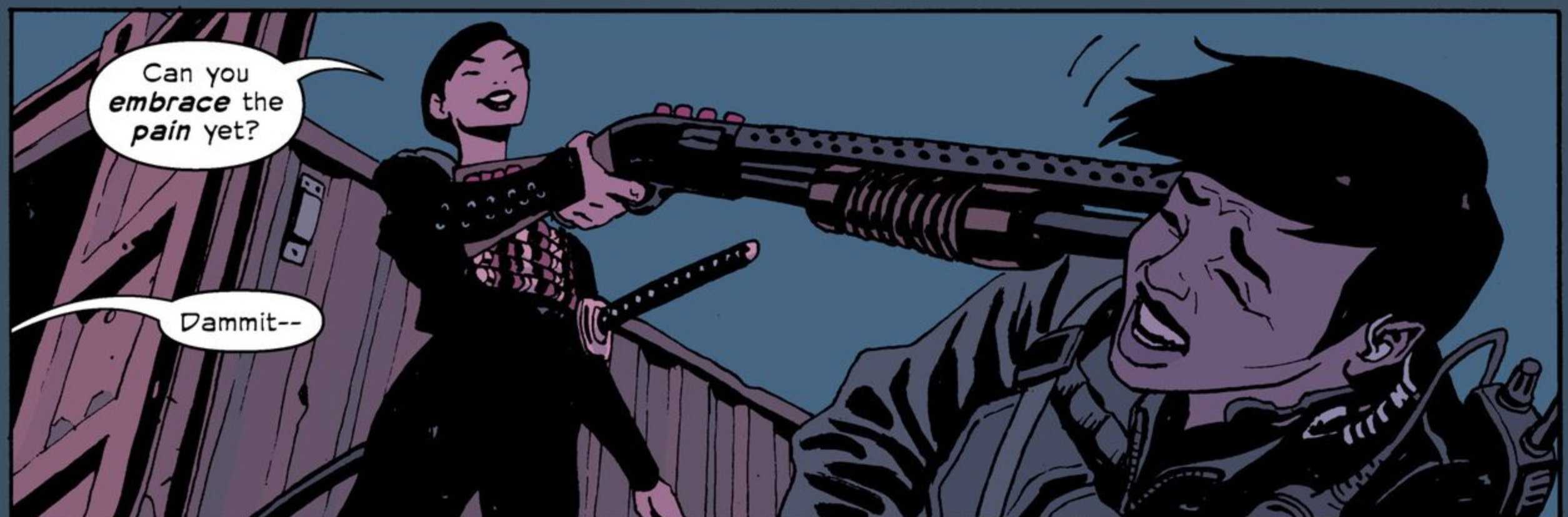
It is
you!

Yusuf!

Look at
you! You haven't
aged a *day*!

Holy
FUCK!

FUCKHOOM









Oh, absolutely!
Let's catch up!

How've-you-been-
oh-fine-just-drowned-
for-centuries-over-
and-over-again--



--abandoned-by-
she-who-promised-
we'd-be-together-
for-ever--



--how
'bout you,
baby?

Noriko--



I tried
to find
you--

You
abandoned
me--



--I tried--

--just like
Booker--



--wait--

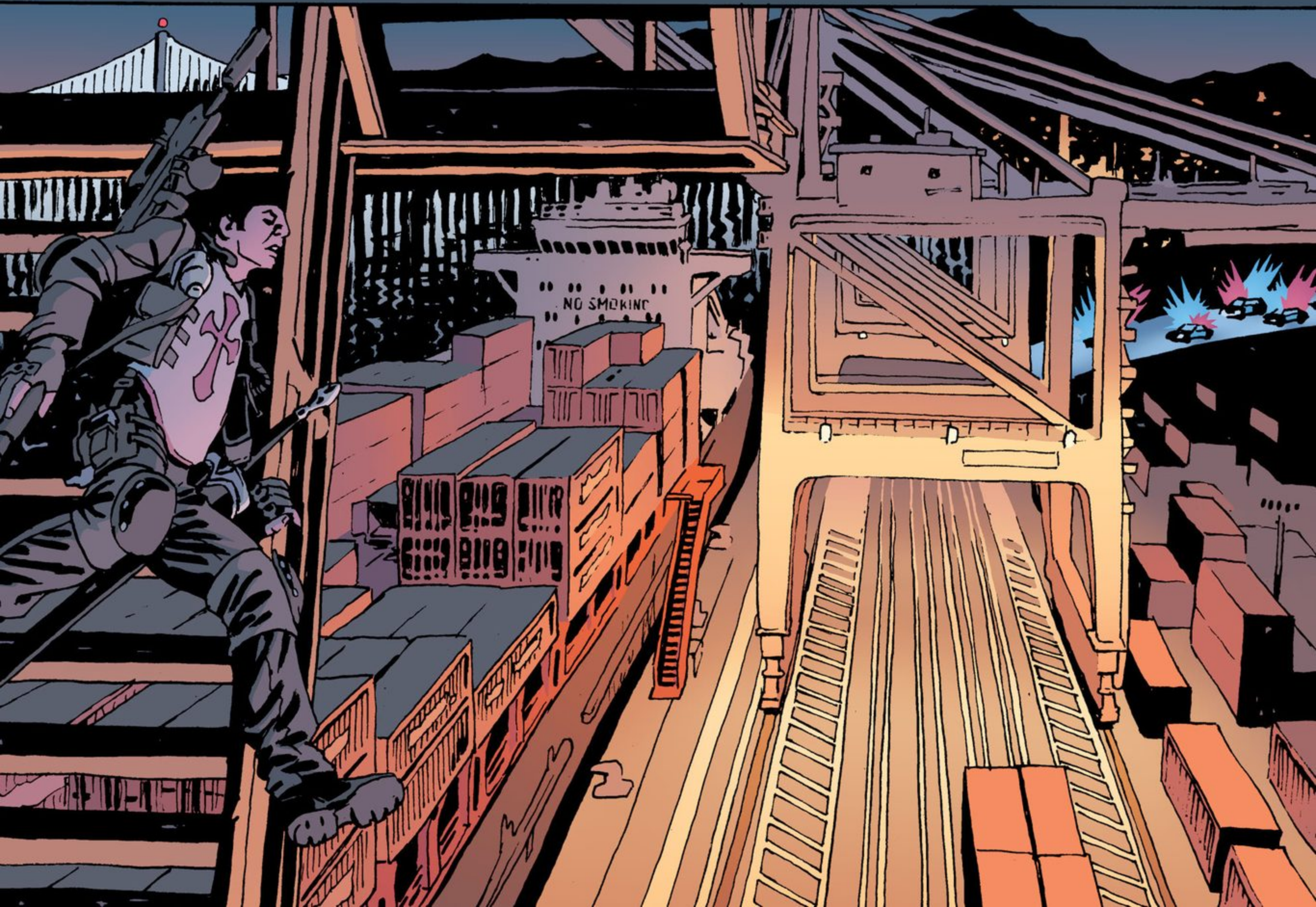
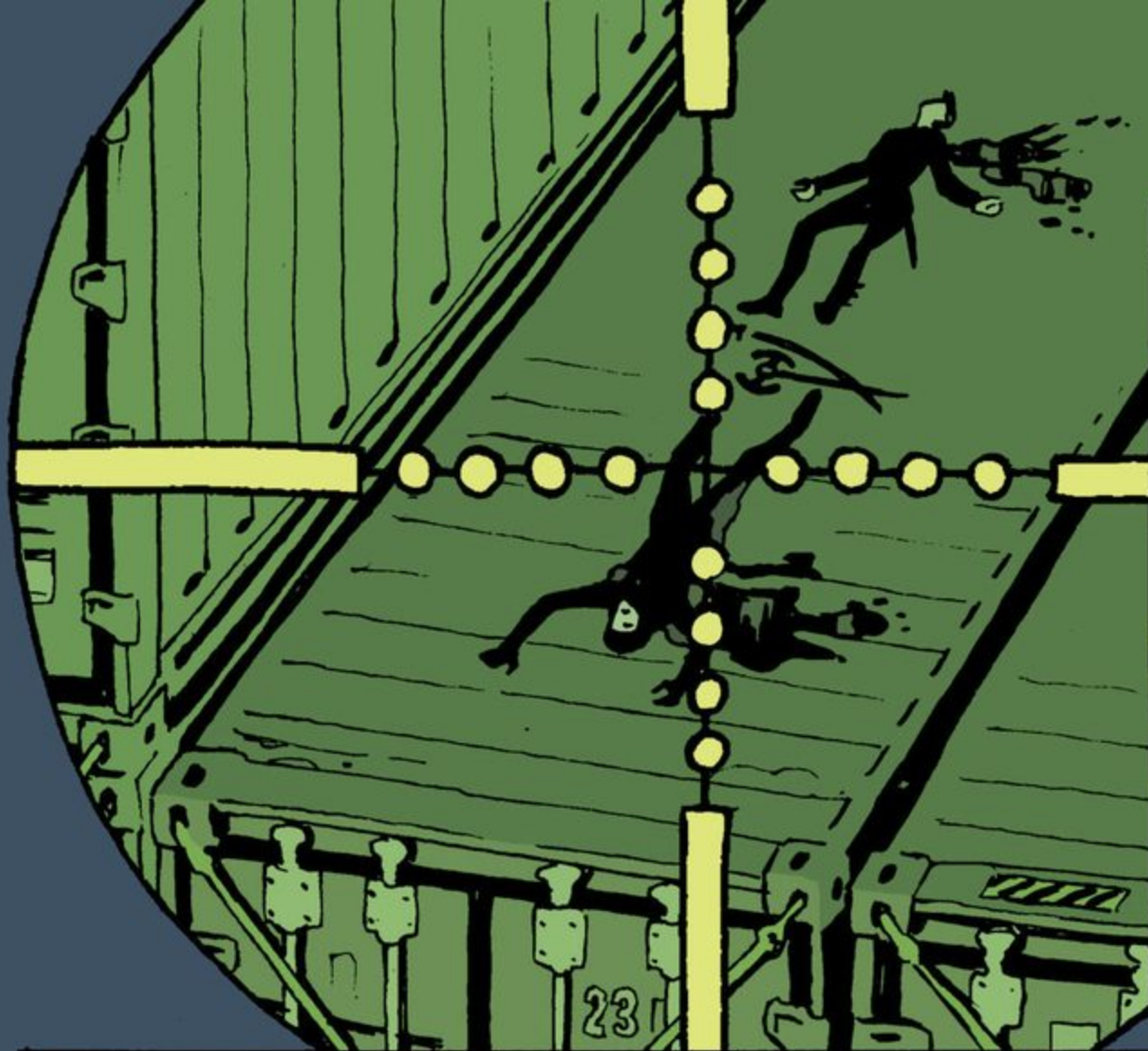
--you lied,
Andromache--



thwack

tunning











...makes **this** first...

...shooter **inside** the container...

You're gonna get up **slow** and keep your **hands** where I can see them.

Watch your **step**.



I **said**--

I heard you. I'm just not doing it.

Christ, **watch** your **feet**...



...thought they **taught** you Bureau boys **better** than that.



I'm James Copley.

You must be **Mustafa King**, yes?

How--

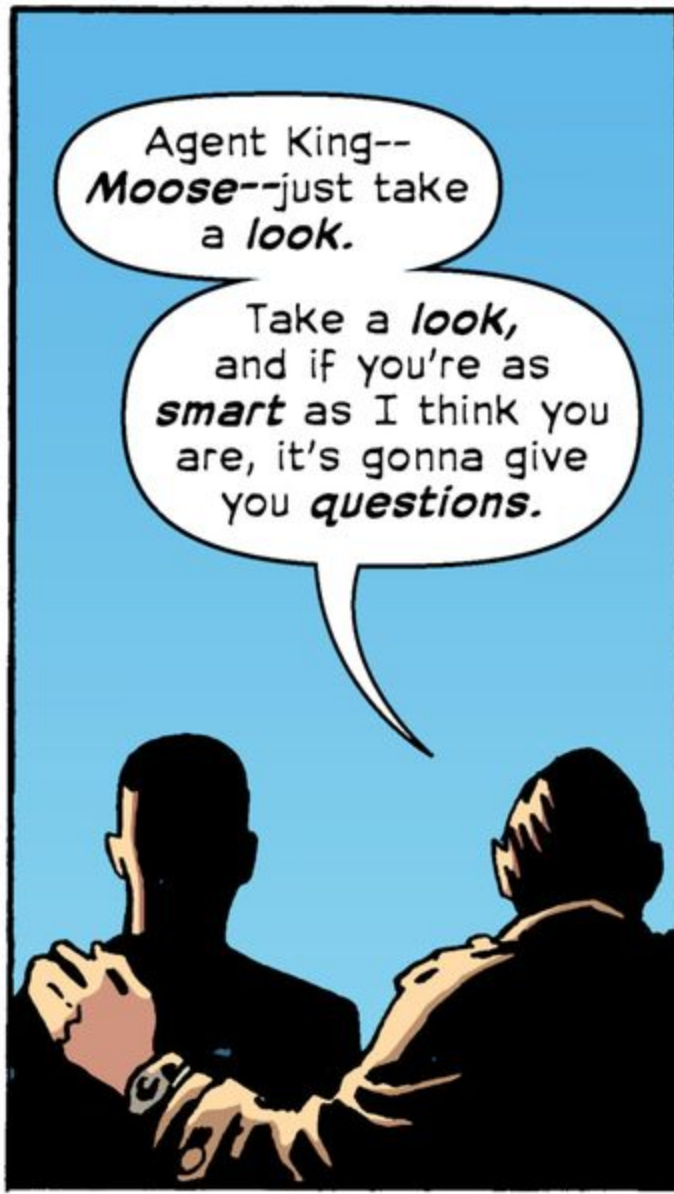


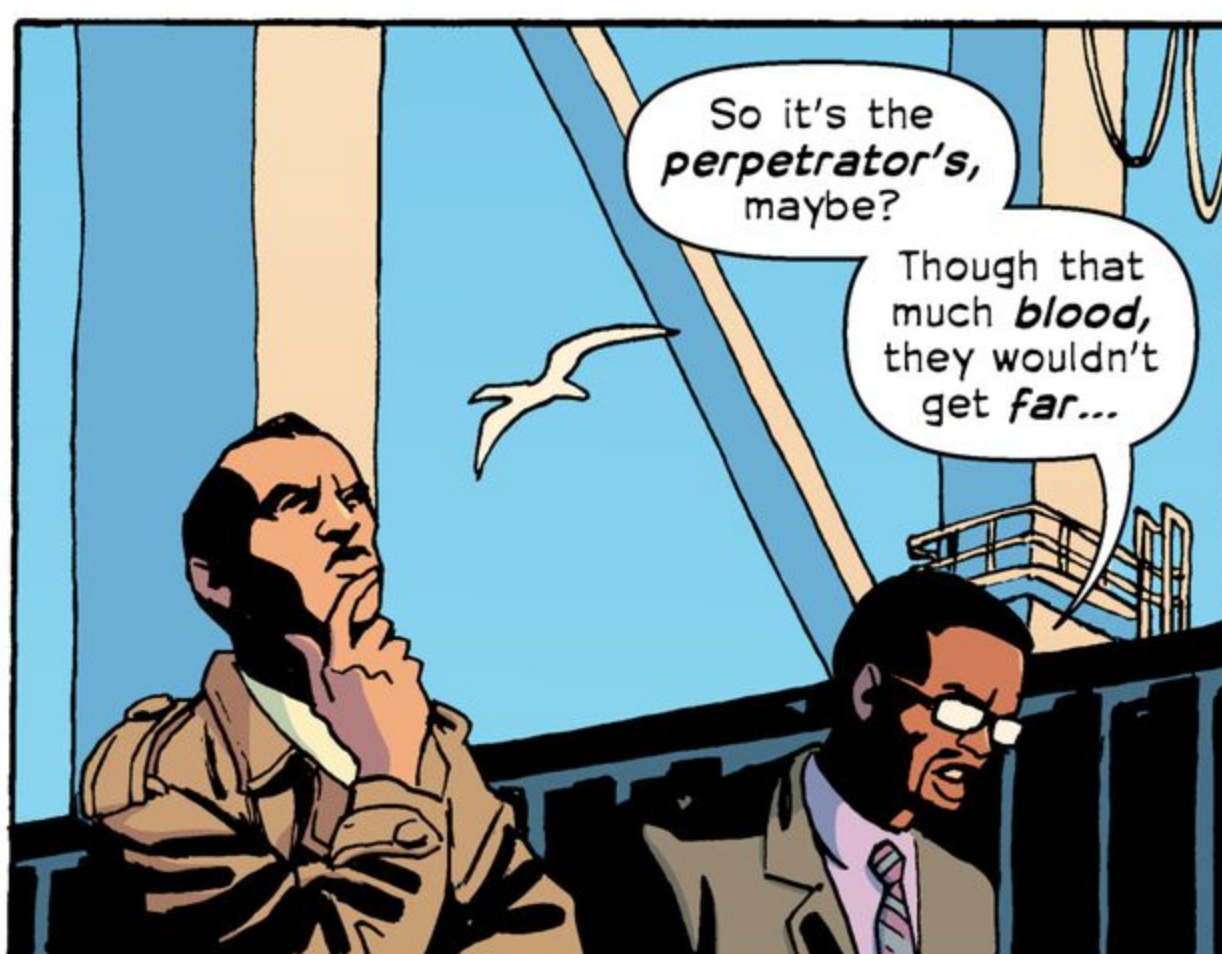
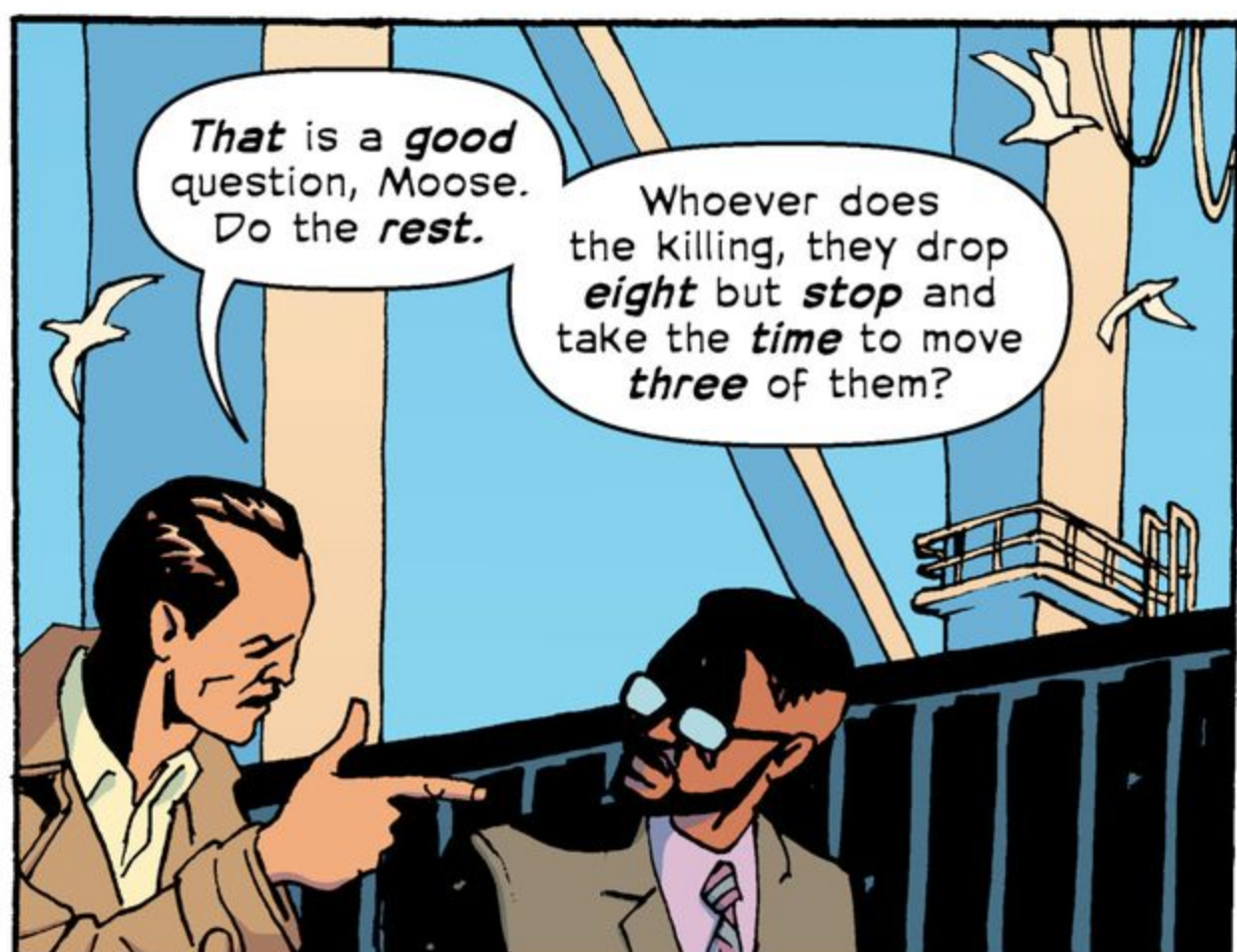
unF



Easier to **explain** from up here.

Is it true everyone calls you "**Moose**"?







...maybe they got *dumped* overboard?

Maybe. Again, would take *time*, though.

Damn...

...nice *shot*, Nicky.



You told Ramirez this was about *human trafficking*.

Ramirez? You *mean* the detective on the dock?

I *did*. That's why *you're* here, isn't it?



I got a *tip*--

I *know*. I know who's been *giving* them to you.



You know?

Huh.

Hey, man--



--I want some answers!

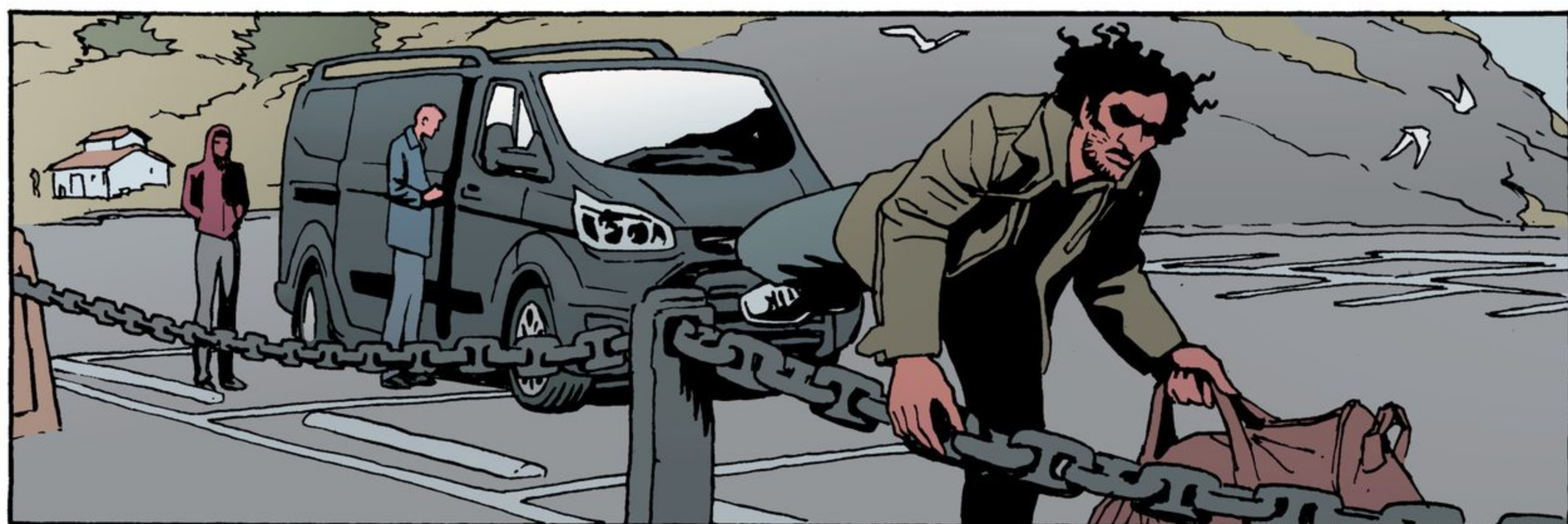


Yeah, man...



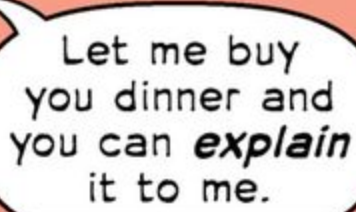
...you and me *both*....



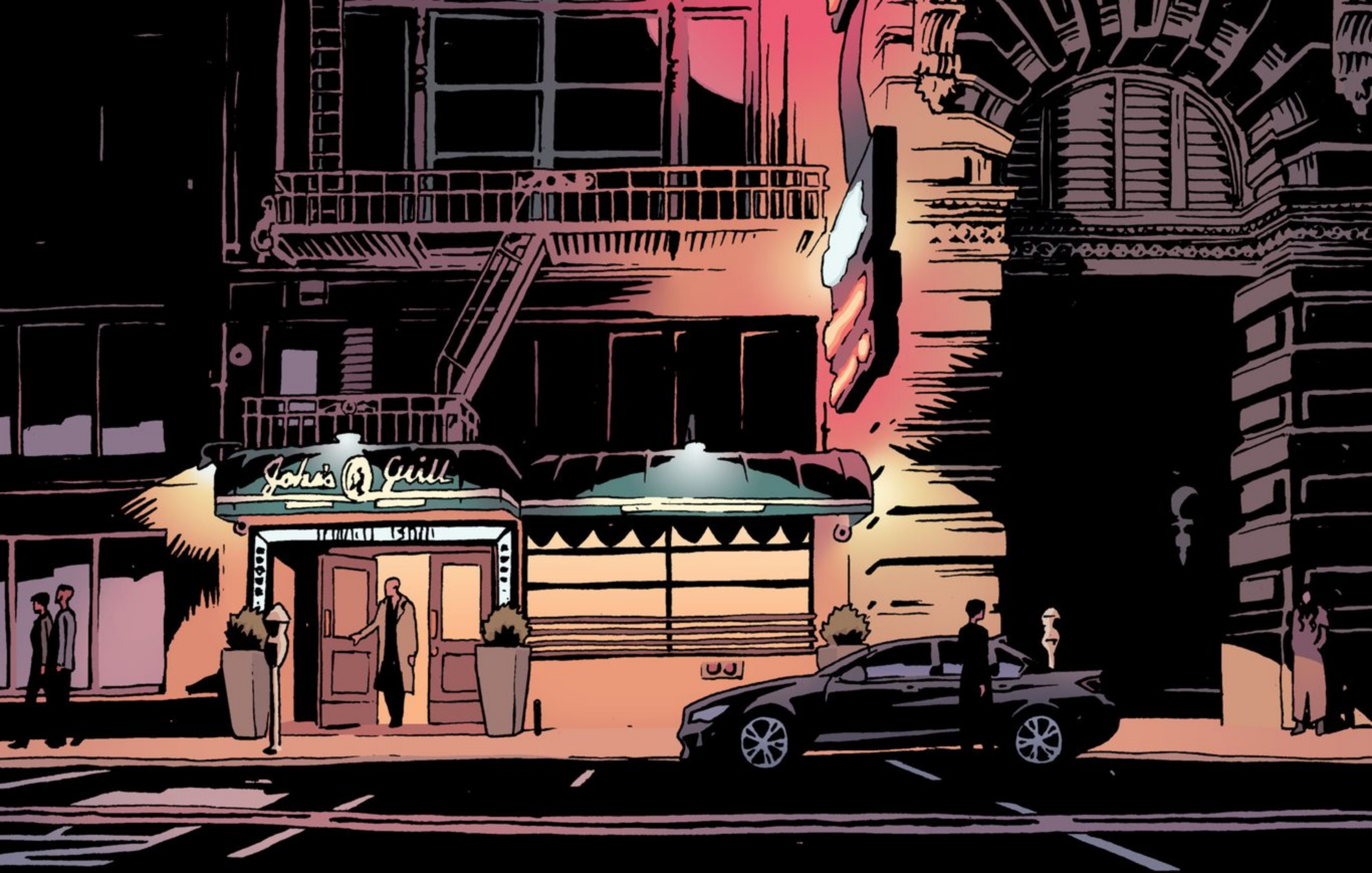










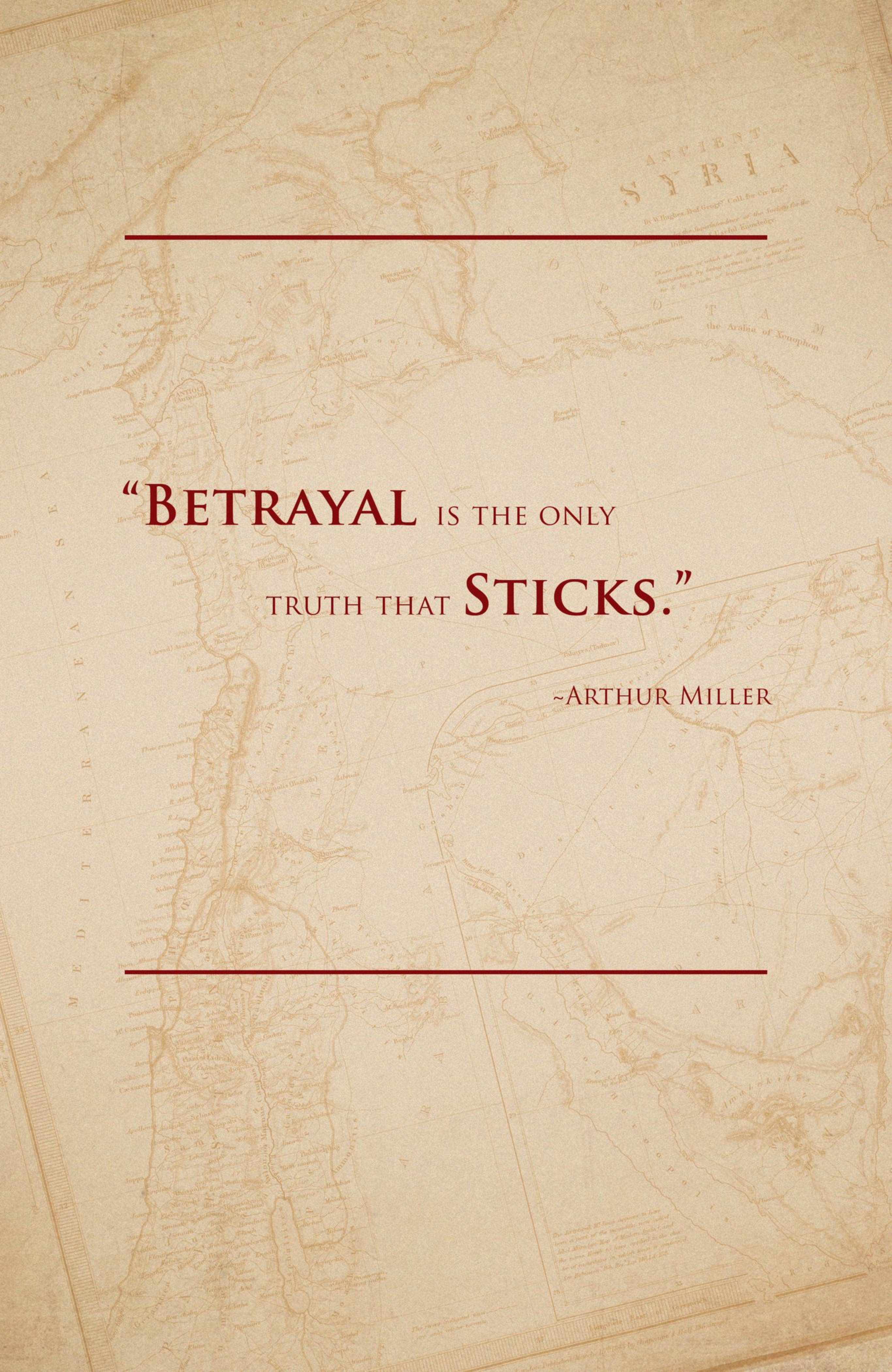


LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ



LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ
Daniela Muro

CHAPTER FOUR



“BETRAYAL IS THE ONLY
TRUTH THAT STICKS.”

~ARTHUR MILLER

Nile asked me once about being immortal.

This was shortly after I'd had to kick Booker, and she was still grappling with that.

She wanted to know if it was a **blessing** or a **curse**.

I told her what she wanted to **hear**. I told her it was what she **made** it.

"What's the **best** part?" she asked.

And I told her that she could **go** anywhere, **do** anything, **learn** everything. That the only limit was her **desire**, because time meant **nothing**.

Then she asked me, "What's the **worst** part?"

I told her I couldn't remember.

The worst part for **me** isn't the worst part for the **rest** of them.

Nicky and Joe found each other **immediately**. They never had to be **alone**, they knew they'd figure things out **together**.

We found Booker within a **year** of his death, which is **nothing** if you think about it.

Hell, Nile didn't even go a **week** on her own.

I am so old.

I am older than
all of them put
together.

I said you never forget your
first time, your first battle.

It's true, you don't.

Maybe you lose the **details**,
but you **remember** the feel
of it, at the least.

You never forget the first
time you **died**, either.





If she wasn't my mother by birth, she was my mother in every **other** way.

I couldn't have been **more** loyal to her if I'd tried.



But by then, she'd grown **afraid** of me. That's the truth of it.

I was young and strong and smart, and that threatened her.



Me coming up from **behind**, and **time** in front of her, waiting to collect its **due**...

...it made her **paranoid**, it made her irrational.



That's why she murdered me...



...even if it wasn't her hand on the **spear** that did the job.

Speaking as someone who has been **hurt** in almost **every way** imaginable...



...there's **no pain** quite like a broken heart.

Nile is young, and Nile has questions.



"Why are we like this?" and
"Is there a reason?"



Nicky has the same questions.
So does Joe, even if he doesn't
ask them.

Even Booker wondered why.
"What's the purpose to an
uncertain immortality?" he
used to say.



And Nicky would tell him,
"To put some good into the
world," because that's who
Nicky is, and always will be.

Nile likes that
kind of answer.



I'd like to believe it's
true, I really would.



But I don't.



You live as long as I have, you see people at their worst.



You live as long as I have, you've maybe done some of that worst **yourself**.



But back at the **start**?
Before I understood how I was **different**, and how different I was?



All I knew was my world.



And my world was very **small**, and very **simple**...

...and I **ruled** it, because that was what you **did**.

That was how you **survived**, just **pure Darwinism**.

We didn't understand why **water** fell from the sky, let alone why **lightning** crashed and **thunder** rumbled.

Why the **sun** rose and set, why the **moon** would vanish and return.

So we made **reasons** that made **sense** to us. Forged **causalities** where there were **none** to be found.

Not so **different** from **today**, if I'm honest.

Then, we gave those reasons **names**. Called them **gods** and **spirits**.

I was one. For a while.



But as the **years** began to accumulate,
as everything changed around me, the
only thing that remained **constant**...



...was that I was alone.



I tried *running* from it.
I tried *living* with it.



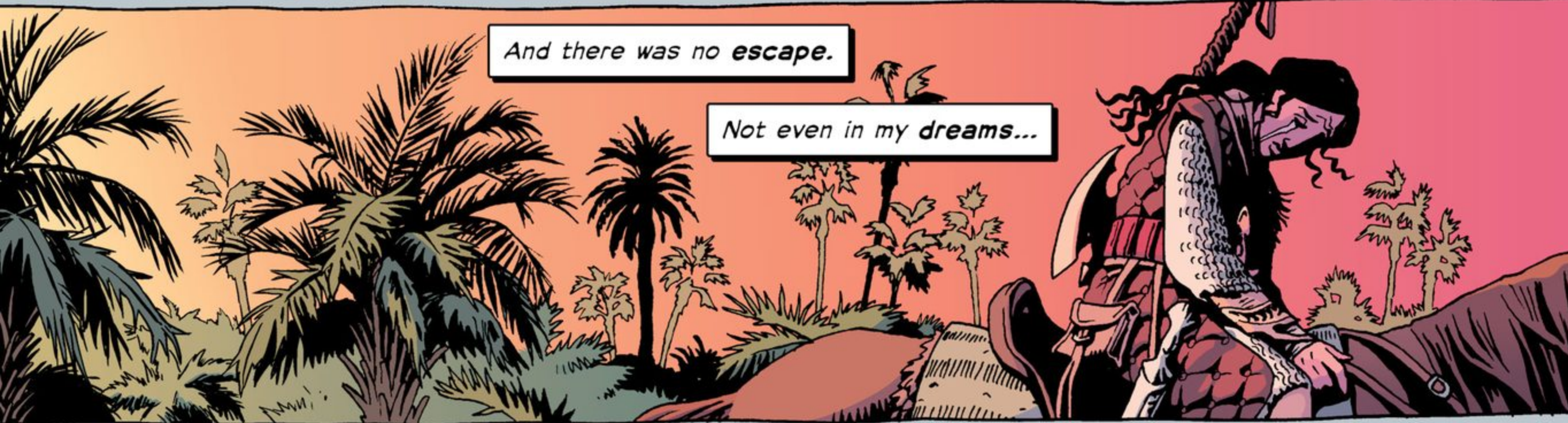
I tried to make *peace* with what was happening.

I tried *embracing* what I was.



But for almost three thousand years, wherever I *went*, whoever I was *with*...

...I was, over and over again, left *alone*.



And there was no *escape*.

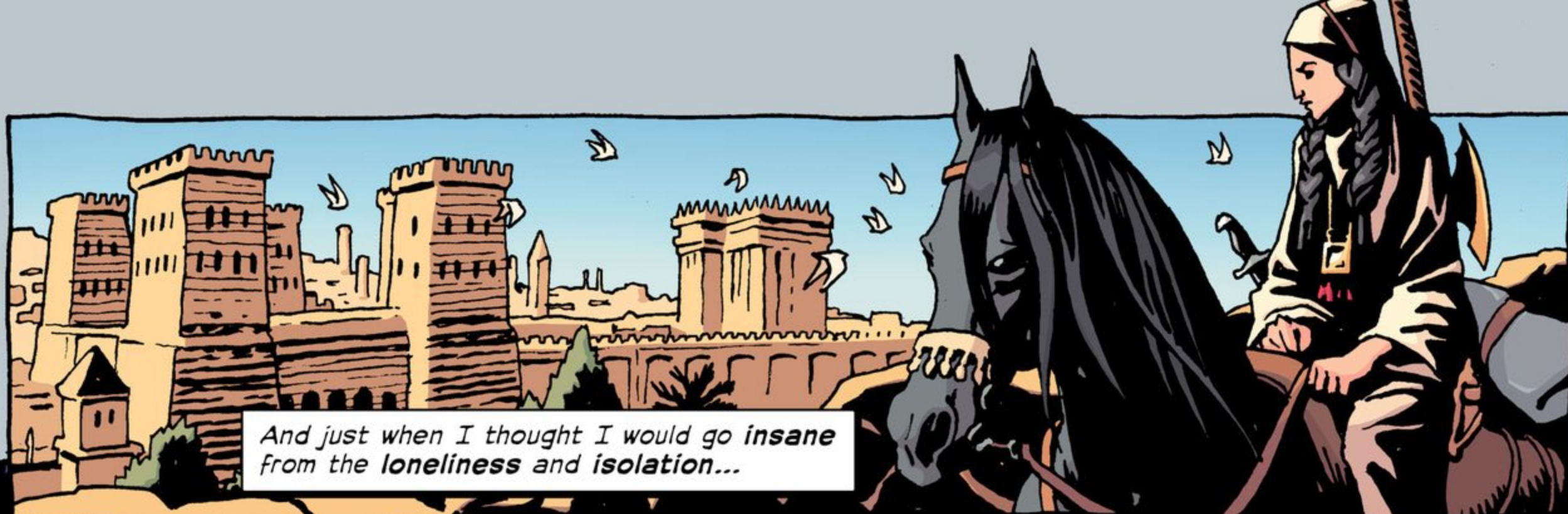
Not even in my *dreams*...



...for a *thousand* years I'd seen this *woman*.

I didn't know what it meant. I thought it was my *imagination*.

My *only* companion, a *figment* of my mind.



And just when I thought I would go insane
from the loneliness and isolation...



...I dreamt someone new.



And this time I understood.



His name was Lykon.



He was like me.



And I wasn't alone anymore.



For a while, I slept in *peace*.

But only for a while.



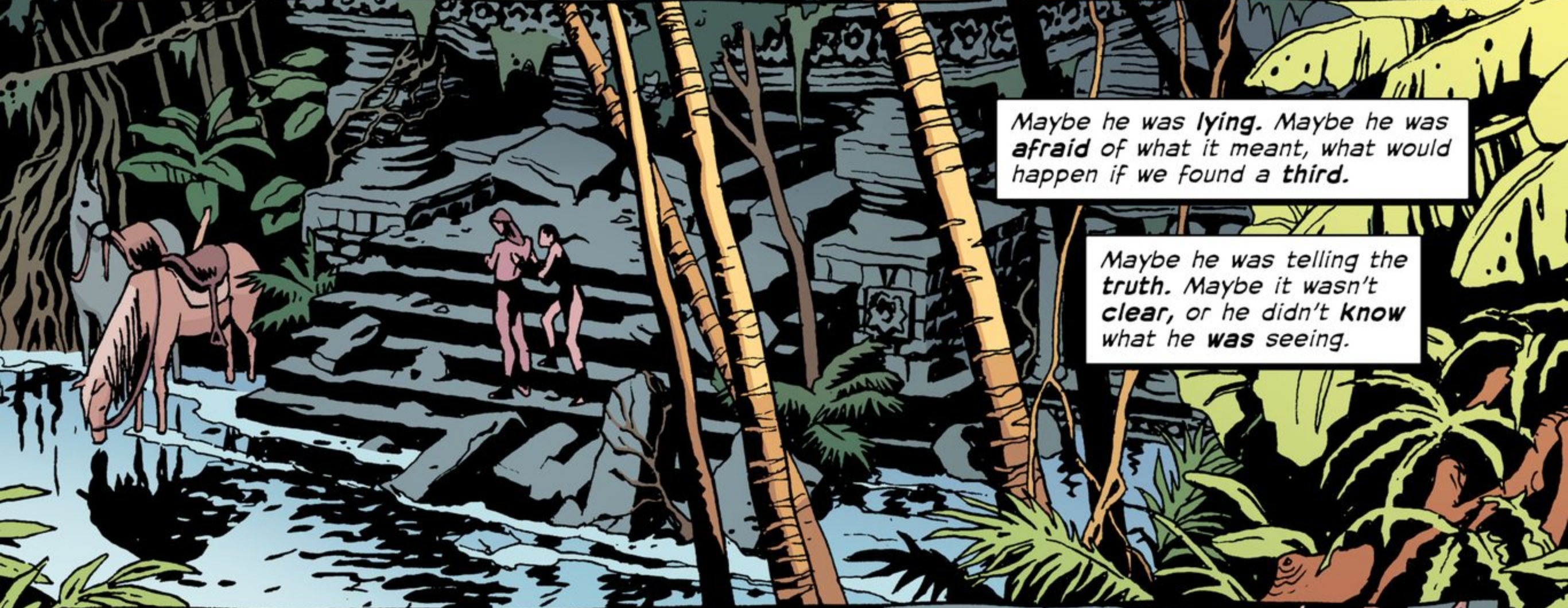
I'd dreamt of *Lykon*, and *Lykon* had dreamt of *me*.

When I told him about this *woman* I'd been seeing for *centuries*...



...he *didn't* know what I was talking about.

He *didn't* see her.



Maybe he was *lying*. Maybe he was *afraid* of what it meant, what would happen if we found a *third*.

Maybe he was telling the *truth*. Maybe it wasn't *clear*, or he *didn't* know what he *was* seeing.



It *didn't* matter.

I *knew*.

A man with dark hair, wearing a brown tunic and a white shawl, is riding a brown horse. The horse is standing in a desert landscape with palm trees and a city in the background. The sky is a deep blue with many white birds flying. The man is looking down at the horse's head.

I knew she was alone.

Like I had been alone.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black headscarf with gold jewelry, is looking directly at the viewer. She is holding a sword in her right hand. The background is a solid blue color with a few white birds flying.

Noriko.



I thought she was lost to me.

I don't even know where to *begin*, 'Riko.

Maybe she still is.



How about "I'm *sorry* I left you for *dead*"?

No? Too on the *nose*?



Have you ever *drowned*, Andromache? In all your years? Have you experienced *that* particular demise?

You might think *burning* is worse, but it *isn't*. Drowning is *more* excruciating.



Do you know *how many times* I died in the water?



Too many times.



Once was too *many*.

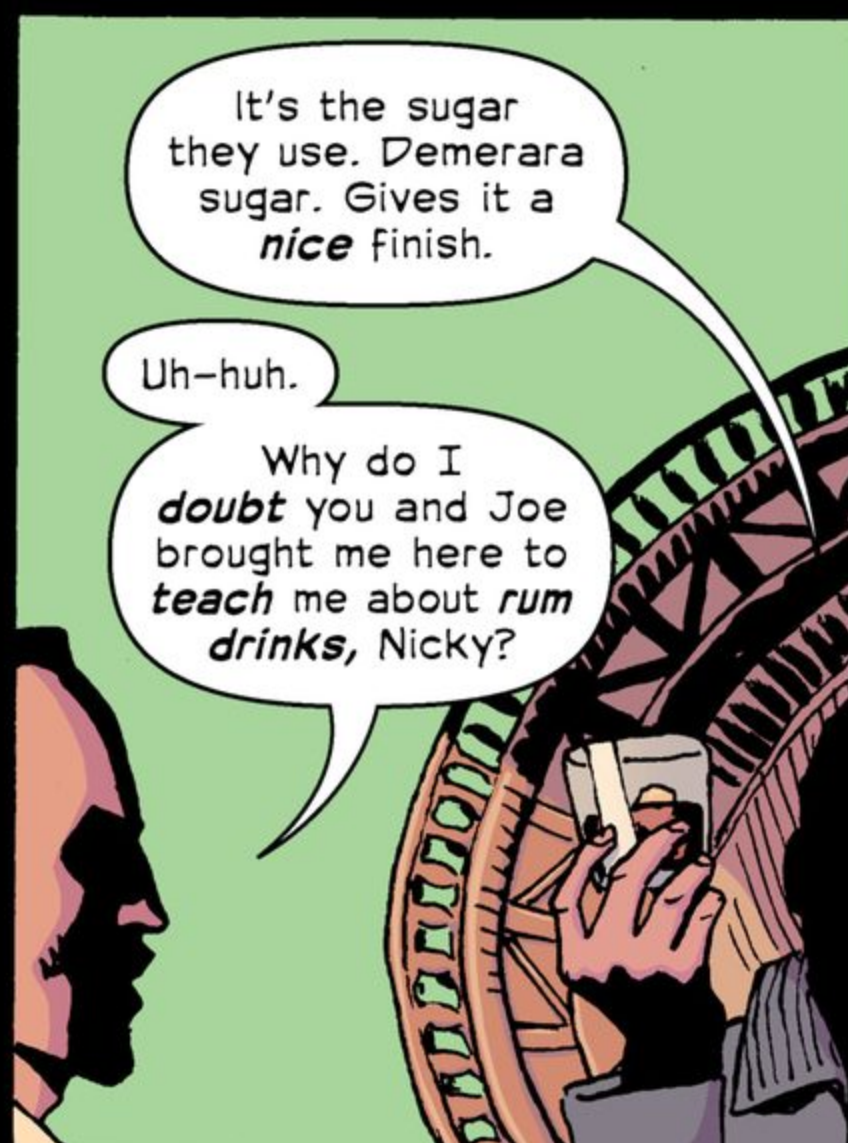
I spent *years* under the sea, returning only to die *again*, over and over and over.



Once was too *many*.







It's the sugar they use. Demerara sugar. Gives it a *nice* finish.

Uh-huh.

Why do I *doubt* you and Joe brought me here to *teach* me about *rum drinks*, Nicky?



We didn't, James.

We're trying to decide if we have to *kill* you or *not*.

You haven't made a terribly *strong* argument for sparing you, if we're being *honest*.



Guys--

Andy were here, there wouldn't be a *debate* at all, you understand that, right?

You selling us out to *Merrick*...that *alone* would've settled it.



And here you are *again*, just as...

...well, let's say the *timing* of things is suspicious.

It *is*, I *know*--

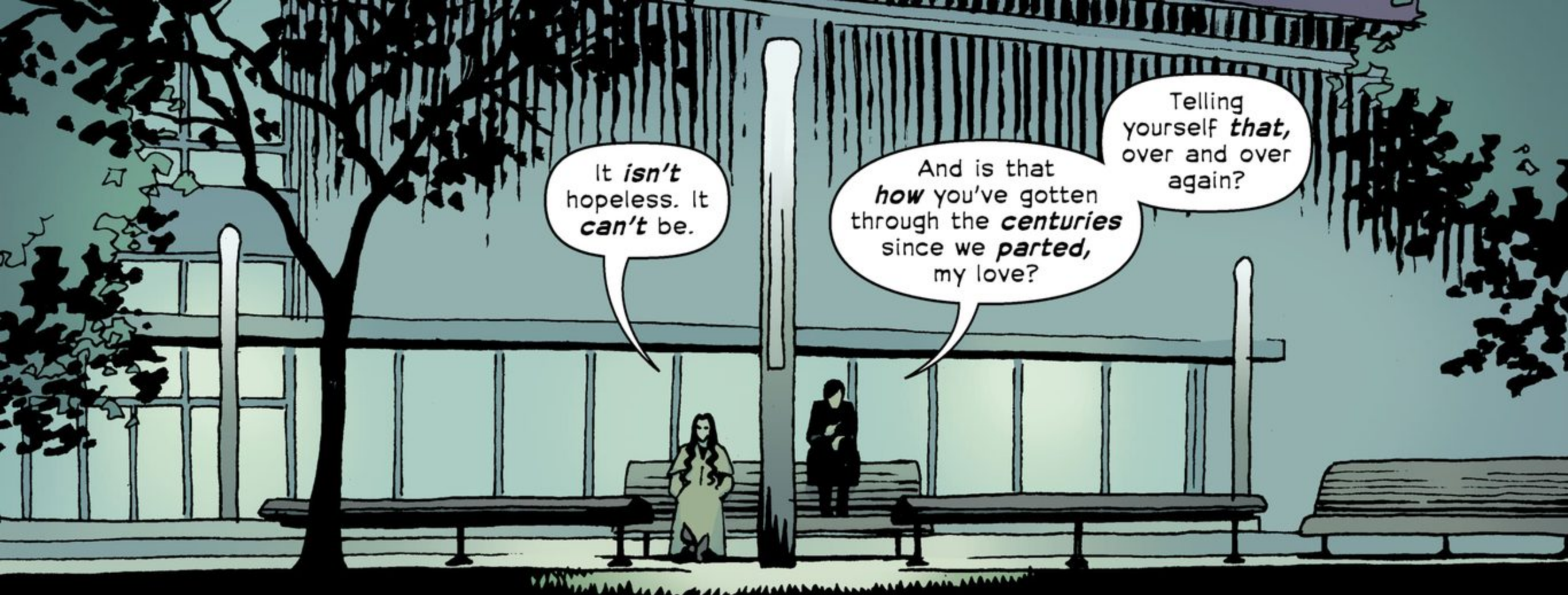


Right--

--but *not* why you think! It's *not* what you *think*, I *promise*!



Talk.



It *isn't* hopeless. It *can't* be.

And is that *how* you've gotten through the *centuries* since we *parted*, my love?

Telling yourself *that*, over and over again?



You *know* it's not *true*. You know I'm *right*.

You're *older* than I am, you've seen it more *clearly*, certainly.

What have they *accomplished* that can give you *hope*?



Medicine. Technology. Education. *Sanitation*.

I mean, they invented *sports bras*, for fuck's sake, that's a damn *improvement*, 'Riko.

Mhm...



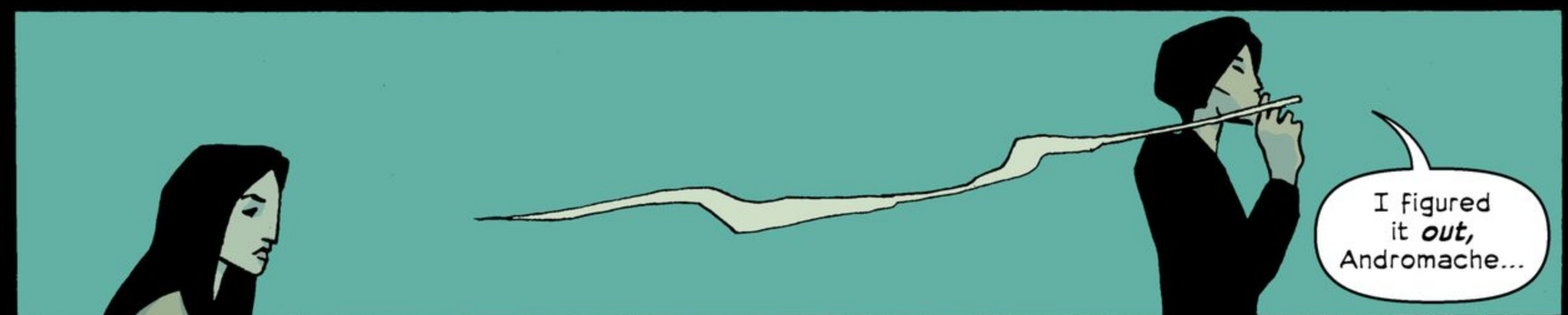
...and *these*.

Do you remember when *tobacco* was *rare*? When it was *holy*?

And now it's *mass-produced* and murders millions...



...more than you and I have done put *together*.



I figured it *out*, Andromache...



...dying over and over again, I achieved *clarity*.

I understood *why* I was being *punished*. And it *was* punishment, make no *mistake* about that.



Just as *you* have been punished...



...all the *losses*, all the *loneliness*...



"...all the *heartbreak*..."



"...all the *betrayal*..."



...the *price* for your *sin*, just as I had to pay the price for *mine*.

What sin?

Hubris.



I've never *claimed* to be an angel.

But you've *refused* to be a *devil*.



That is what we *are*, my heart.

Not made to *help* them, but to *hurt* them...



...our *purpose* is to make them *suffer*....



How *certain* are you?

As an *analyst*, I'd tell you *nothing* is one hundred percent.

Further back you go, it gets *exponentially* harder to track. The last century or so, *much* easier...



...but if you *extrapolate* my findings--

I *remember* this one...



...*Budapest*, during the *uprising*.

After they rolled *armor* into the *city*, Andy and I heard her *crying* from the *ruble*...

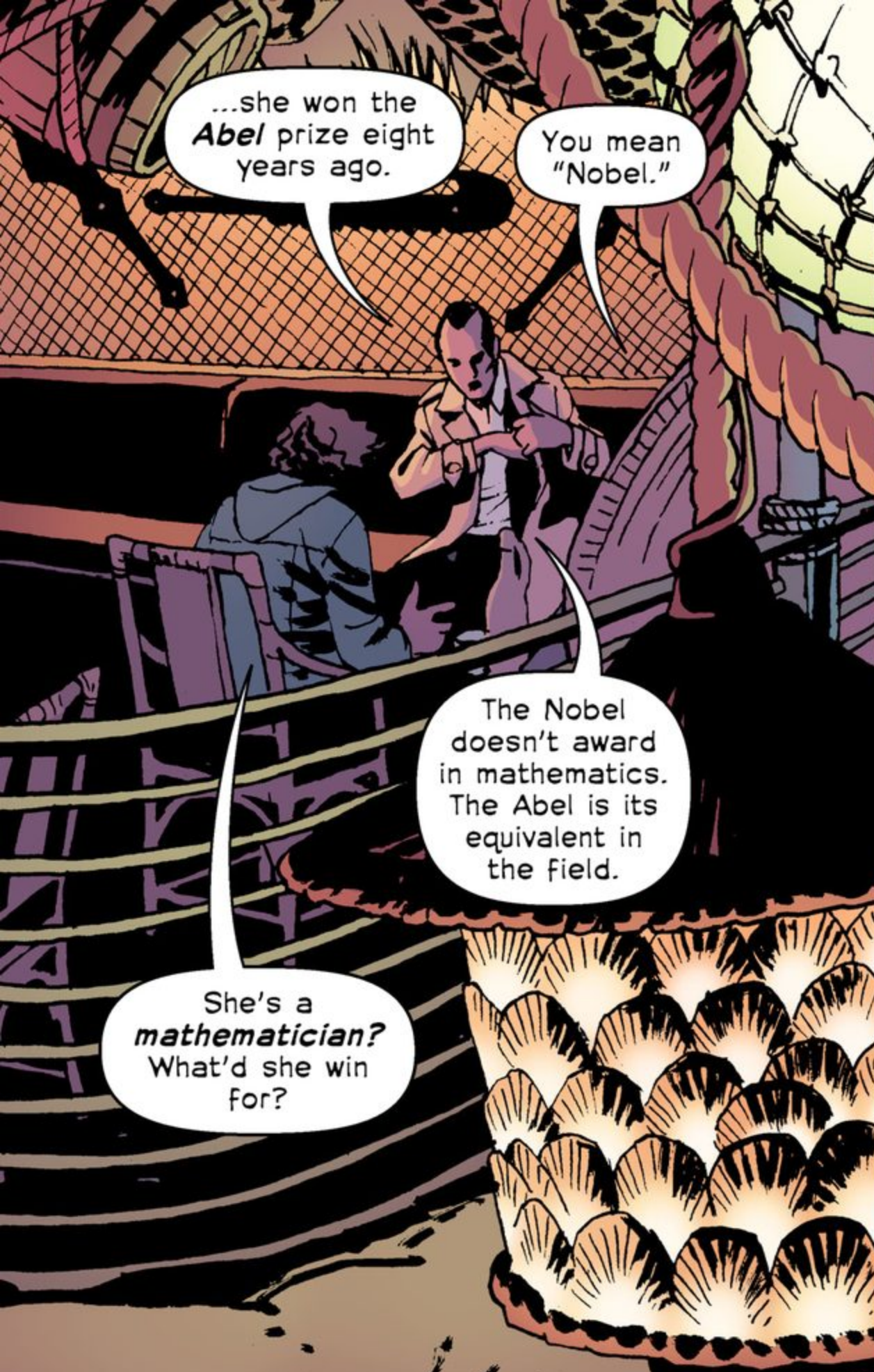


...the poor thing couldn't have been *six months old*...



...her parents had been *killed* by the Soviets.

Her name is Rada Salak. *Doctor* Rada Salak, she's still *alive*...



...she won the **Abel** prize eight years ago.

You mean "Nobel."

The Nobel doesn't award in mathematics. The Abel is its equivalent in the field.

She's a **mathematician**? What'd she win for?



Contributions to **additive number** and **ergodic** theory, and *no*, I don't know what that **means**.

Apparently the **computer science** applications are **revolutionary**.



Doctor Salak is **one** example. I found **dozens** more.

Everything happens for a reason.



What's **yours**, James?



I'm trying to make **amends**.



Andy should've **ended** me in Dubai for what I did to **her**, to **you**...

She told me she was almost seven **thousand** years old.

My life should've meant **nothing** to her...

"...but she let me live.

"When I'd first figured out what you were, that was the *only* thing I could see. The *what*."

"All Merrick cared about was the *how*."

"For the first time, I asked *why*."

"All the *lives* you've taken."

"All the lives you've *saved*."



Author Karinsky named National Treasure in native country



Karinsky, a na
who lived con
no m m m m m m m

International rece
worldwide pres





...good
and bad.

What
does *that*
mean?

He means
Noriko.



I didn't get a
name. Not a *real*
one, at least.

She's not
like you guys. You
help people. She
hurts them...



...drugs,
weapons,
trafficking...

...ties to
criminal
organizations
around the
globe...



Explains
her interest
in us.

And *how*
she *found* us.

She has
Booker.



That's
what Andy said,
too.



I know
where.

Show us.



--not my damn job
to *convince* you!

How *old* are
you, then?

A *hundred*?
A *thousand*?



I'm
twenty-seven!

Copley
said--

Fuck
Copley! I'm *new*,
okay?



I just...I thought
"Nile Freeman" was an
alias or something.

It's *not*.
It's my damn
name.



Yeah,
you know
what?

I think
this is all
bullshit.



I think I
need to take
you *in* for
questioning,
now.

I'm sorry,
what?

Whatever
happened on the
Oakland docks, you
were *involved*...



...and I have a *job* to do.

I've got to ask you to come with me, now, Miss Freeman.

Are you fucking *kidding* me?

All this, you're telling me you don't *believe* me?

We live in an era of *deep fakes*. Copley could've *fabricated* what he showed me.

That seems *more* likely than *you* and a handful of *others* being *blessed* with *immortality*, don't you think?



I'm not going *anywhere* with you.

Okay *hold* on there wait, *wait--*



--you don't...you don't *want* to do *that*, Nile.

Man...

...you have *no* idea.









This *should* be a *golden age*, ushered in upon *wings* of *science* and *technology*.

Instead, it is the *opposite*. The start of a new *dark age*, using those *same* tools to spread *ignorance* and *fear*. We've both seen *that* before.

You think I'm wrong.

Yes.

I'm *not*.

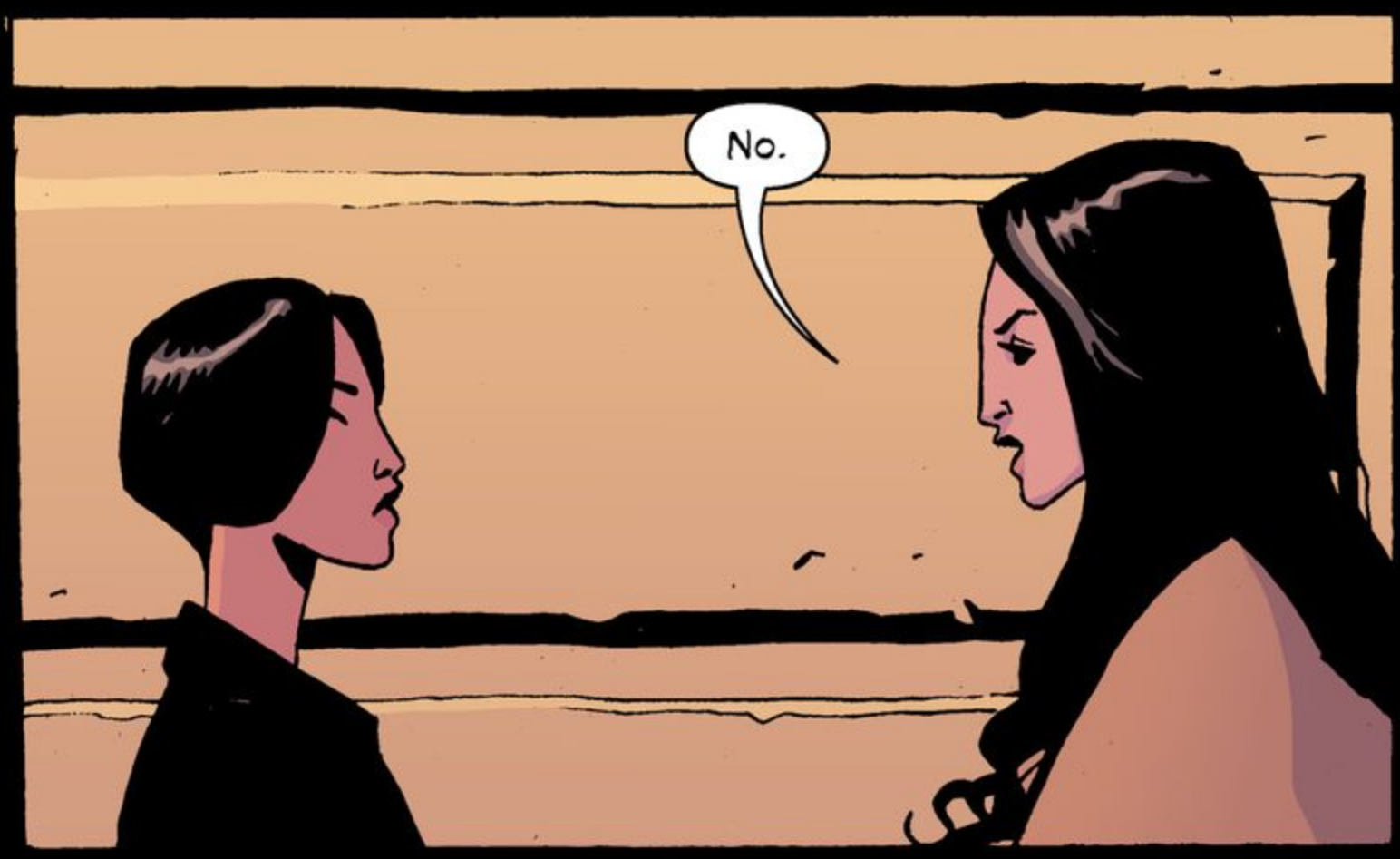
Face it, my heart, the more things *change*, the more they stay the *same*.

We *aren't* them, we never *were* them.



And *they* are *vermin*.

Which makes us *exterminators*.



No.







ding-
ding



J
Joe

Nicky and I getting
Booker back

Tried reaching
Andy no answer

U know where
she is?



It's *Nile*,
right?

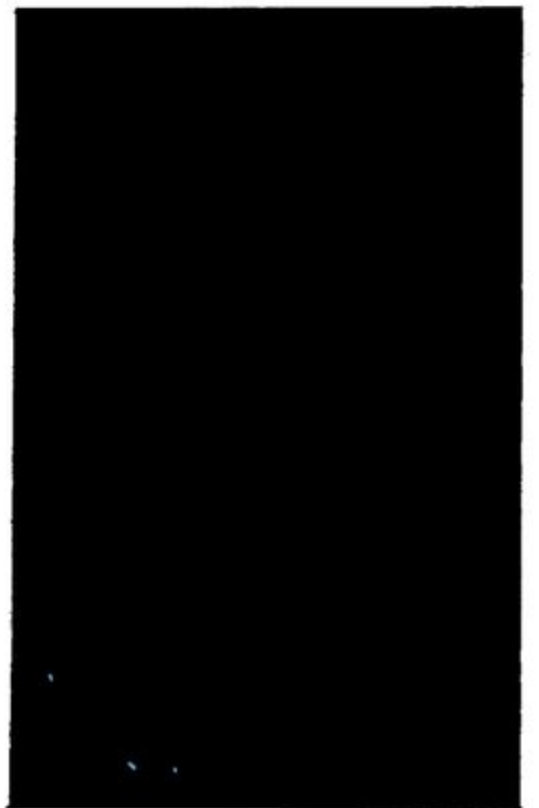


It's okay,
I know, we got
off on the wrong
foot last time.

I'm
Noriko...



...Andromache
sent me to *get*
you....



LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ



CHAPTER FIVE

“DO YOU KNOW WHAT **LOVE** IS?

I’LL TELL YOU: IT IS WHATEVER

YOU CAN STILL **BETRAY.”**

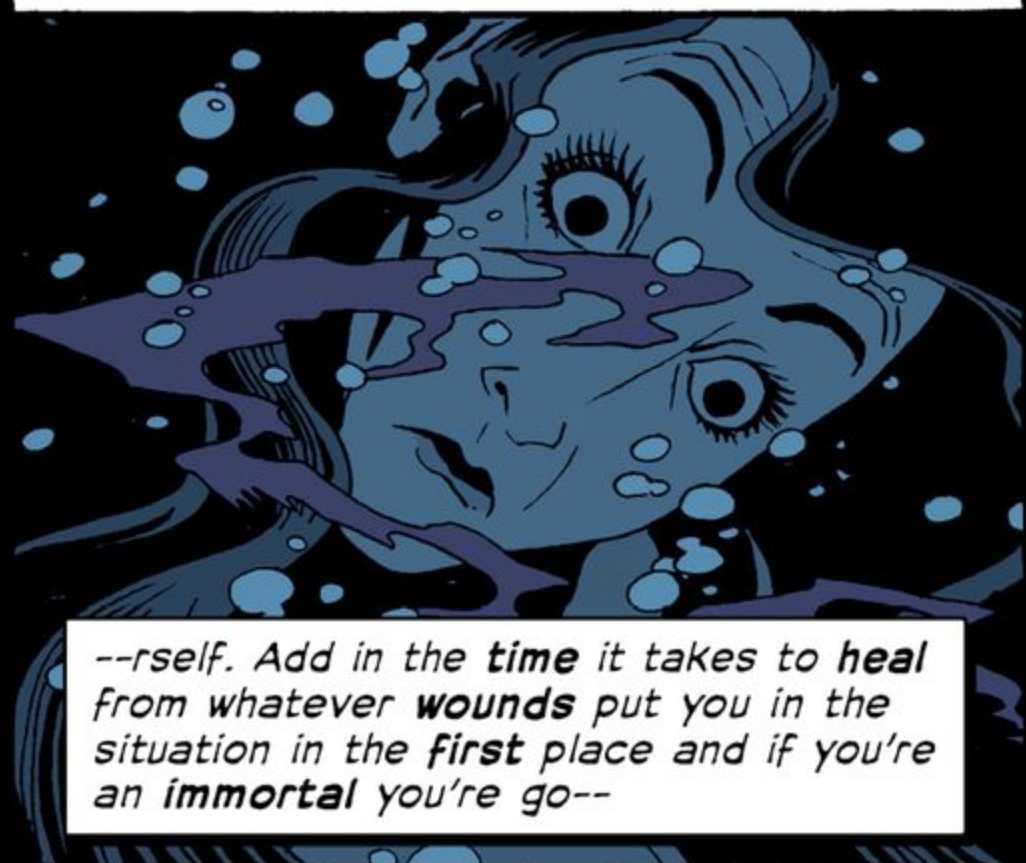
~JOHN LE CARRÉ, THE LOOKING GLASS WAR



It takes about
sixty seconds
to **drown** with a
lungful of **wa--**



--**ter**. In the dark,
disoriented that's
not a lot of **time**
to **save** you--



--**rself**. Add in the **time** it takes to **heal**
from whatever **wounds** put you in the
situation in the **first** place and if you're
an **immortal** you're go--



--**nna** find yourself
locked in a **cycle**
you can't **escape**
unless you manage
to keep **enough** of
your **shit** tog--



--**ether** for
long enough
to **do**
something
about it.

Which can
be **fucking**
hard if you
d--

--on't know **where** you are to **begin** with.

I am in the **trunk** of a **car**, I think, and it only took dy--

--ing I've-lost-count-how-many-times to figure that **out** and the **problem** is that **exertion** bu--

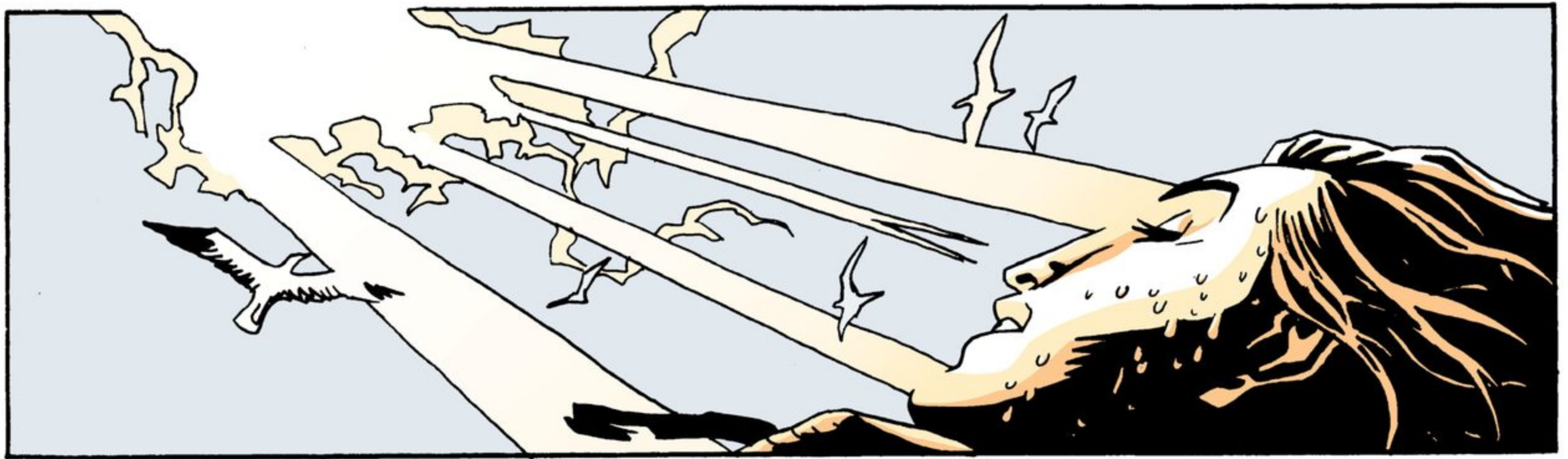
--rns **oxygen** so I actually don't have sixty seconds but maybe **half** that and Noriko always **was** clever and now she's **cruel**, too. It wasn't enough to just **kill** me--

--ve a glow-in-the-dark trunk **release** lever to open it from the **inside**, so all I need to **do** is keep it **toget--**

--but even **despite** that she's maybe **not** as up to speed on the **world** as she **should** be because she would **know** that since 2002 **all** cars must ha--

--her long **enough** to get this damn thing **open** and then hope I'm not **too** deep and **maybe** I can get out not again not--







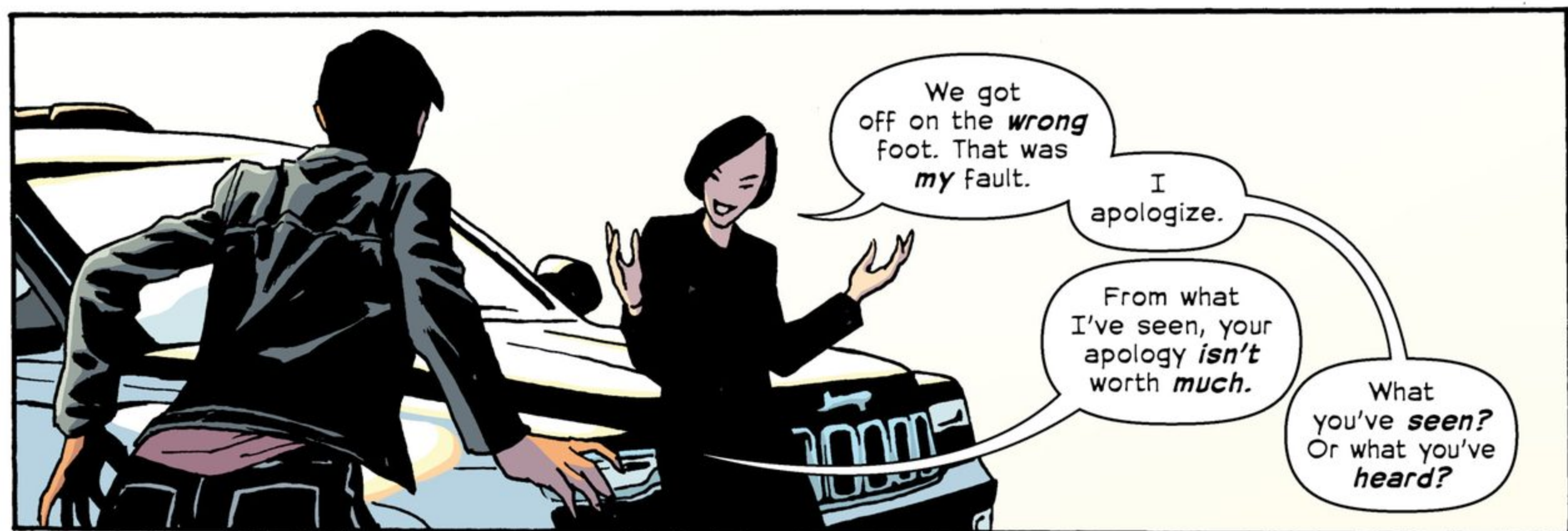
I think we *both* know...



...that's *unlikely* to work, Miss Freeman.



Sure as shit will *slow* you *down*, though.



We got off on the *wrong* foot. That was *my* fault.

I apologize.

From what I've seen, your apology *isn't* worth *much*.

What you've *seen*? Or what you've *heard*?



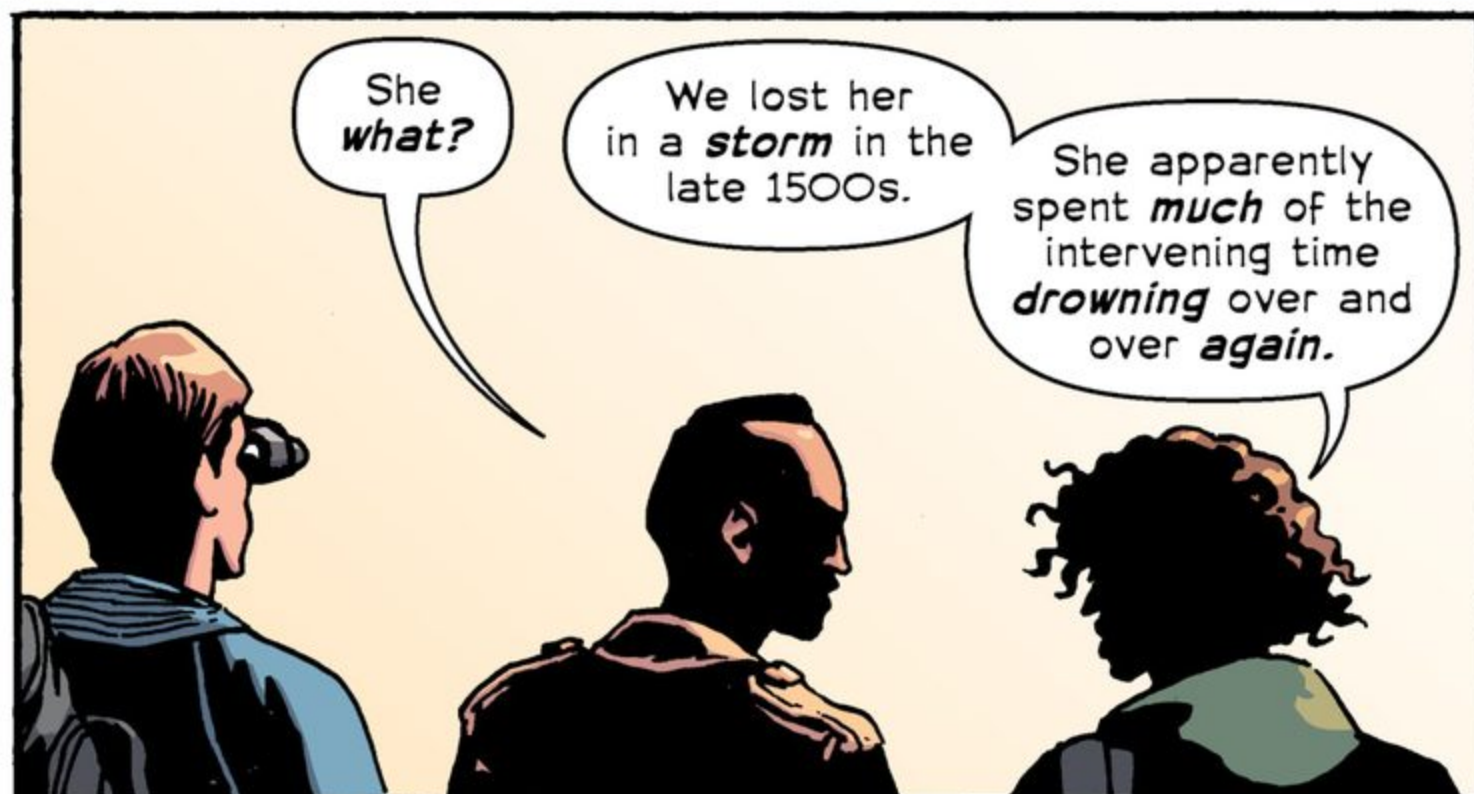
Because I *promise* you, whatever *Andy* and the *others* may have told you about *me*...

...it's *nothing* compared with what they've *neglected* to tell you about *themselves*.



The hell does *that* mean?







It's a Riva
88' Domino
Super.

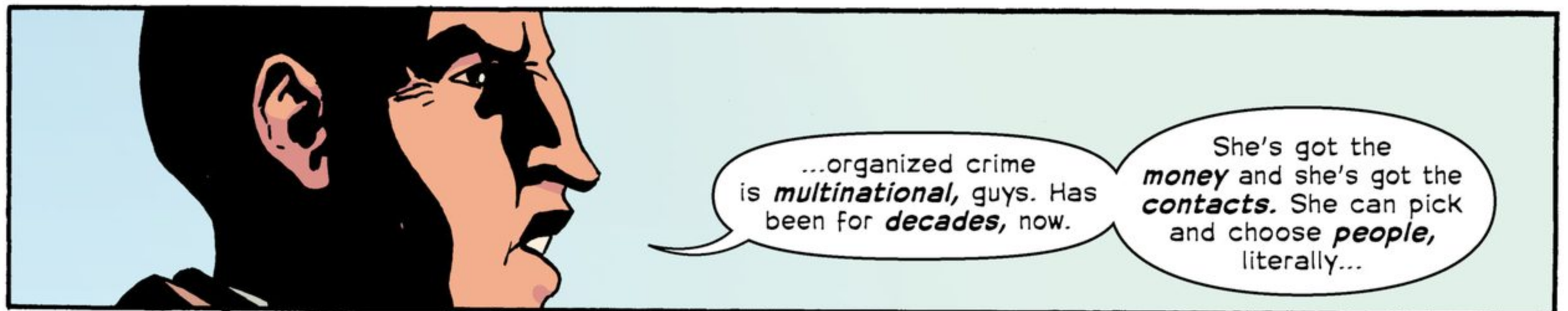
Technically
only needs a crew
of *two*, but can
easily berth up to
twenty...



...and it's a
safe bet she's got
at least that many
aboard, *armed*
and *ready*.

Where
did she get
the *men*?

If it's *global*
and it's *shady*,
your Noriko is
connected with
it, I thought I
made this
clear...



...organized crime
is *multinational*, guys. Has
been for *decades*, now.

She's got the
money and she's got the
contacts. She can pick
and choose *people*,
literally...



...there'll be
no shortage of
muscle.



So, how
do you want to
do this?



Fancy a
swim?





So, I take it you *fucked* him?

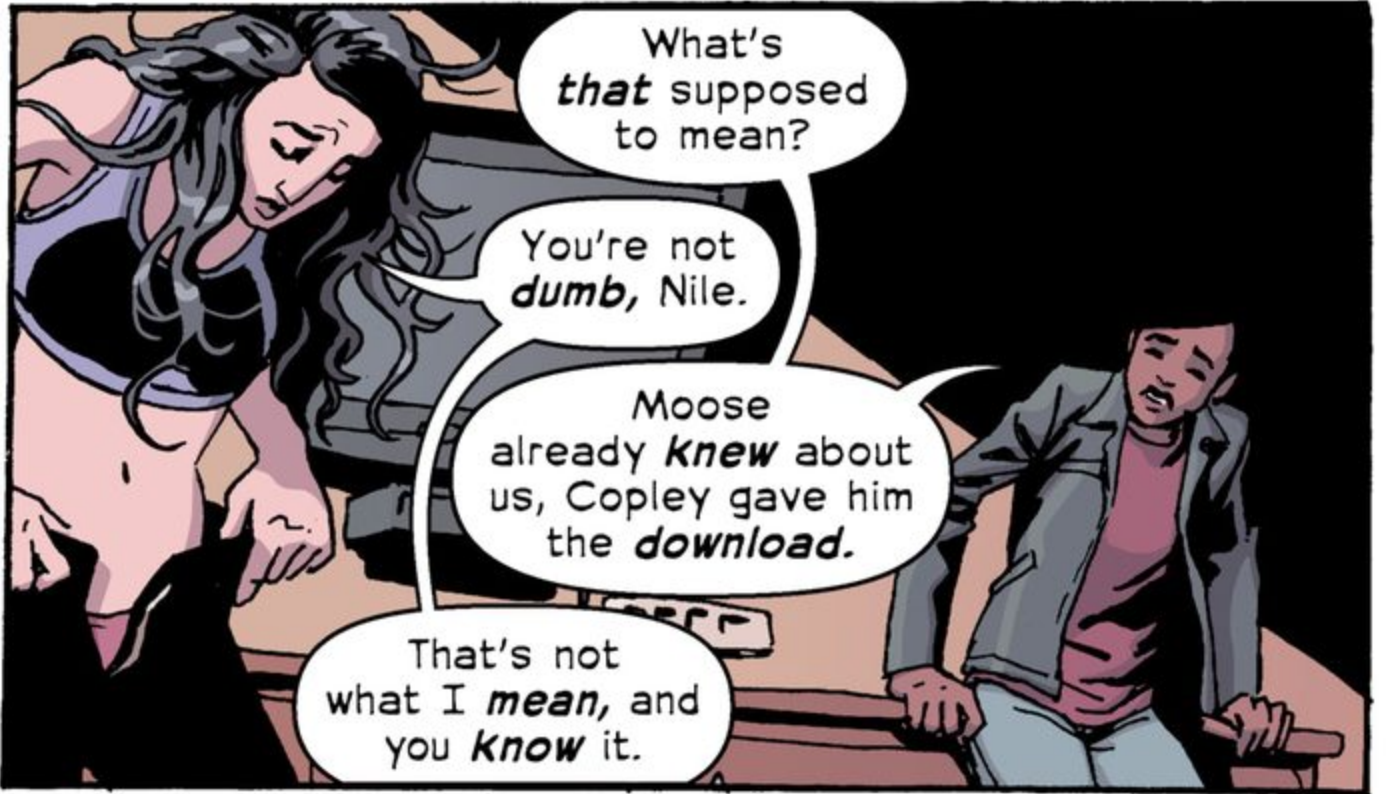
Andy.

What? It's *not* a value judgment. Guy's *hot*.



We slept together, yes.

Good. Hopefully that got it *out* of your system.



What's *that* supposed to mean?

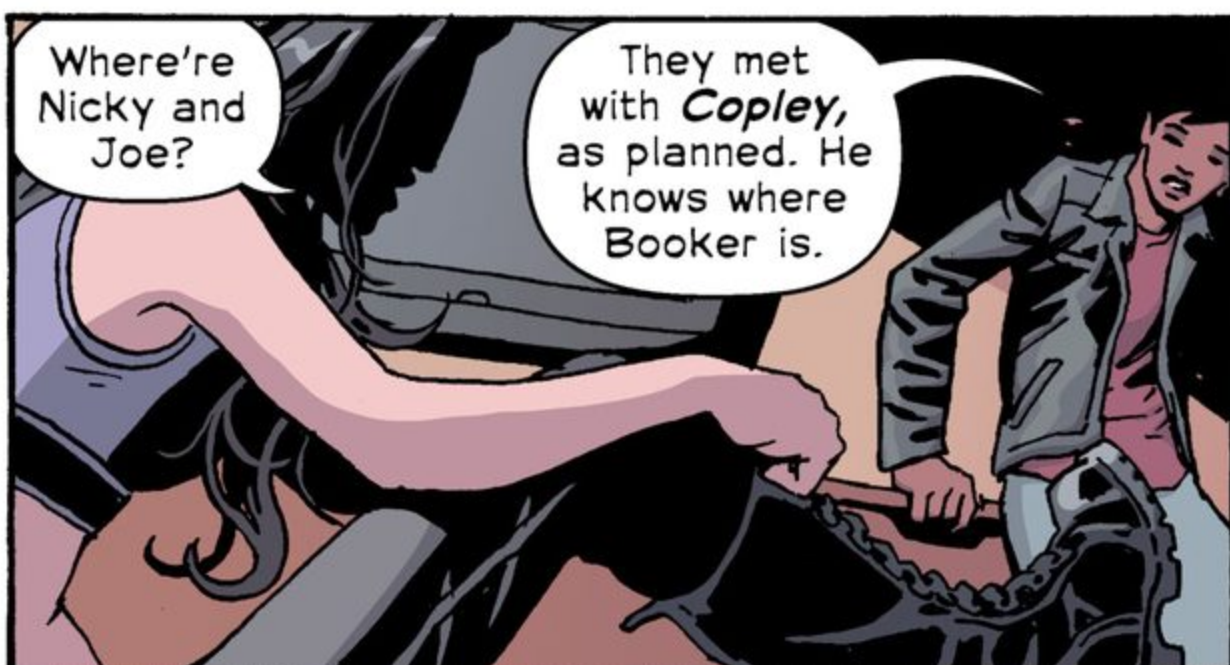
You're not *dumb*, Nile.

Moose already *knew* about us, Copley gave him the *download*.

That's not what I *mean*, and you *know* it.



Guy comes with an *expiration date*, kid.



Where're Nicky and Joe?

They met with *Copley*, as planned. He knows where Booker is.



They were trying to *reach* you. They've gone to get him.

Where?



Should cover it for the **day**, then.

Gotta have it back by six **tonight**.

Shouldn't be a problem.



That's, uh...that's a **lot** of **gear** you boys got there.

You going after **sturgeon**? Or **bass**?



Something **bigger**.



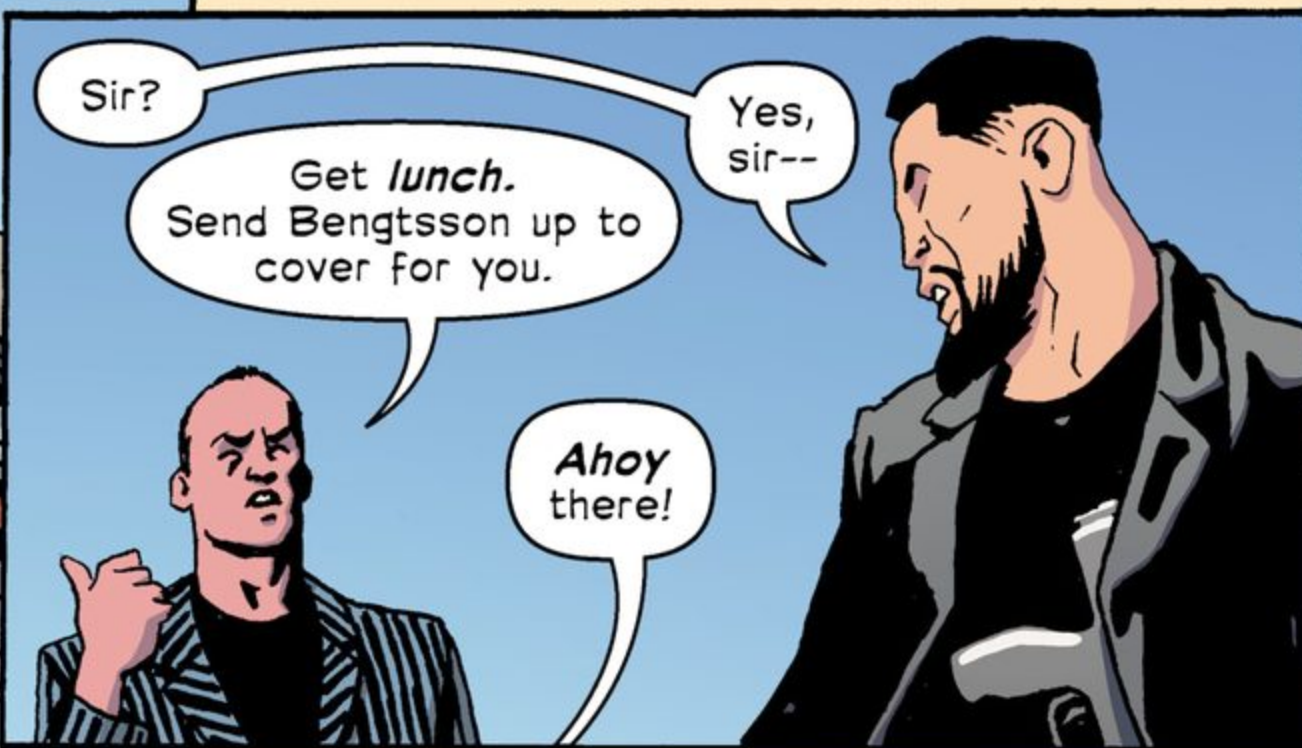
Don't even **think** of going out there without **me**!

We tried to reach you, boss--





Yo, Ricky!



Sir?

Get *lunch*.
Send Bengtsson up to
cover for you.

Yes,
sir--

Ahoy
there!

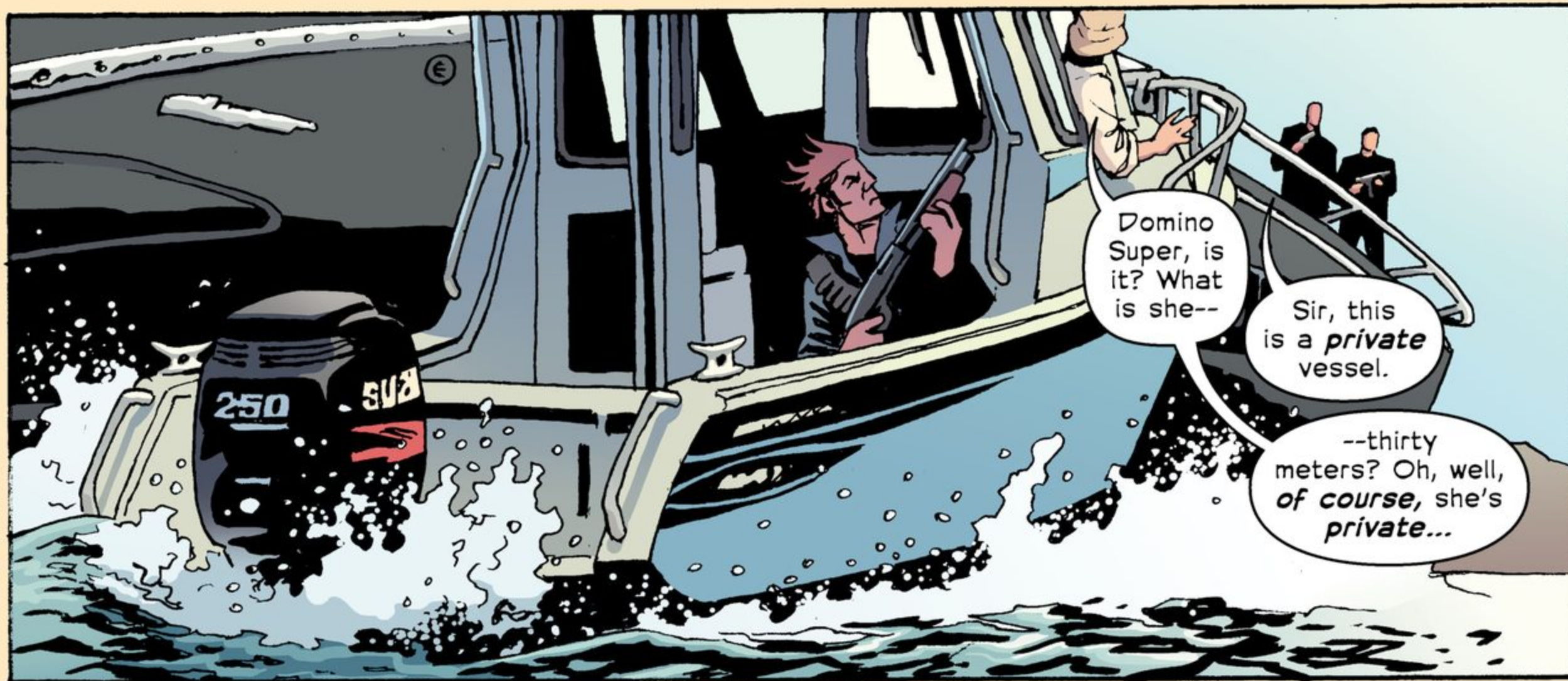


I say--



--ahoy!

Good Lord,
that's a *lovely*
yacht!



Domino
Super, is
it? What
is she--

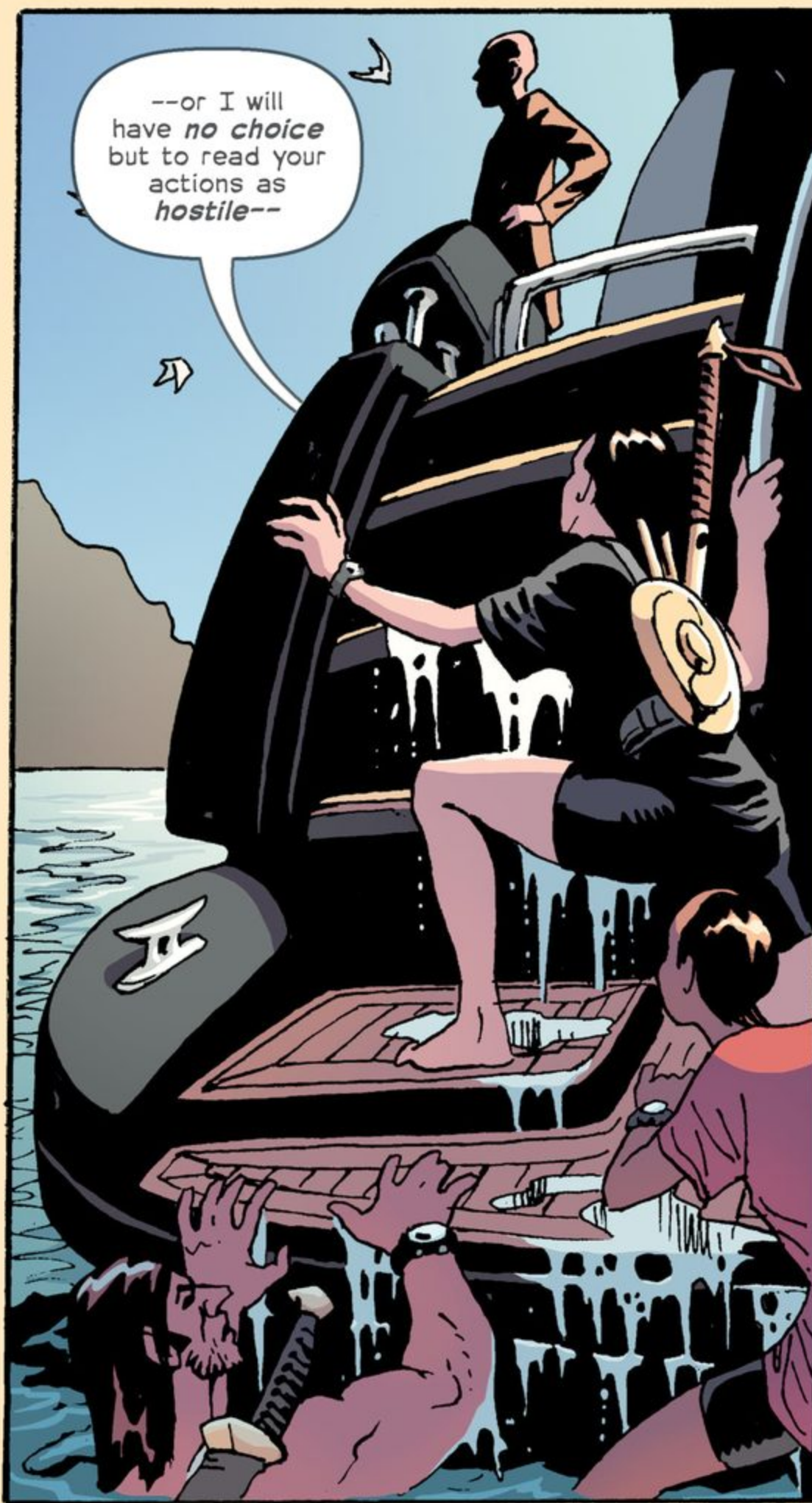
Sir, this
is a *private*
vessel.

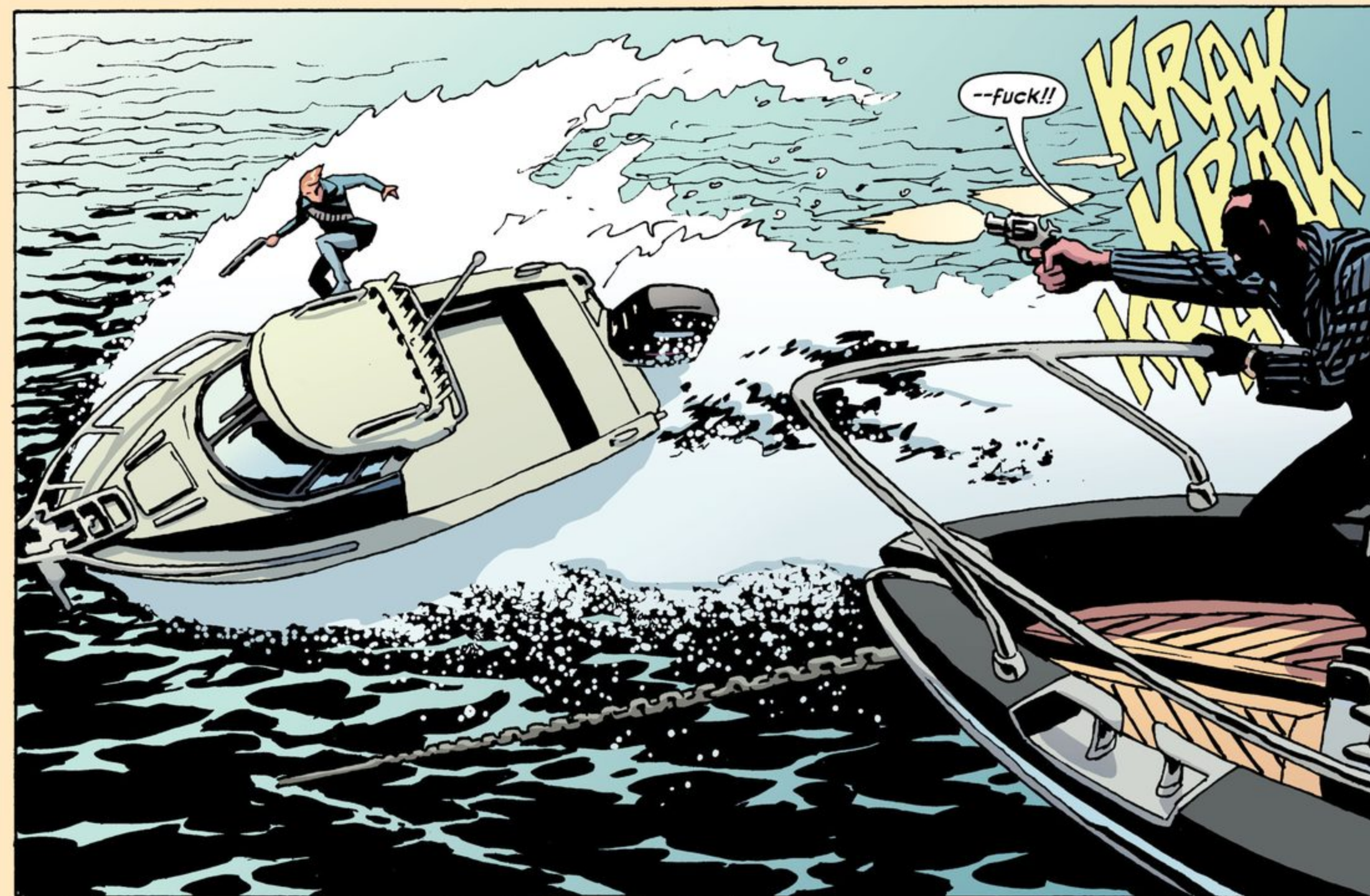
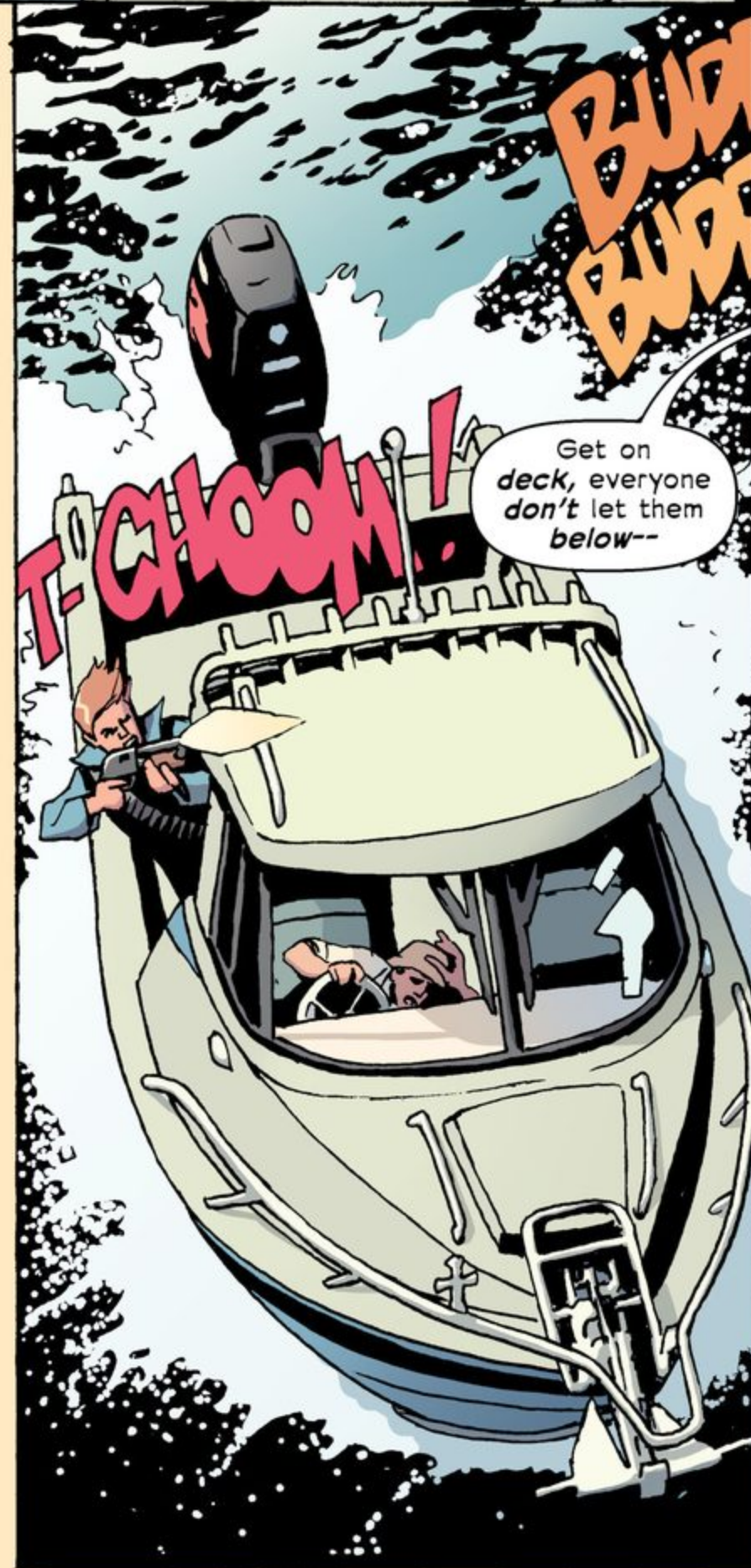
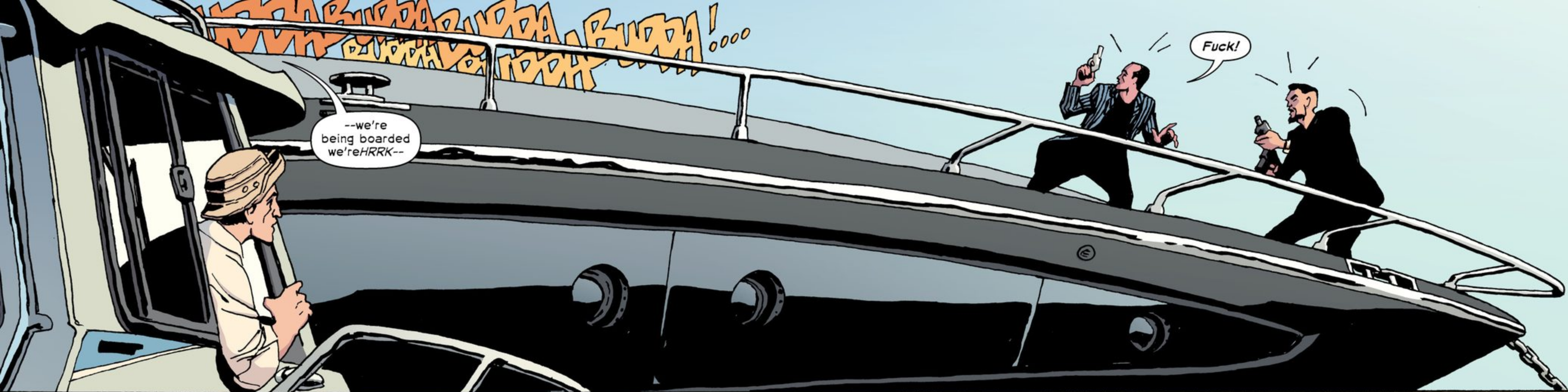
--thirty
meters? Oh, well,
of course, she's
private...



...didn't
imagine she was
publicly owned,
hah-hah--

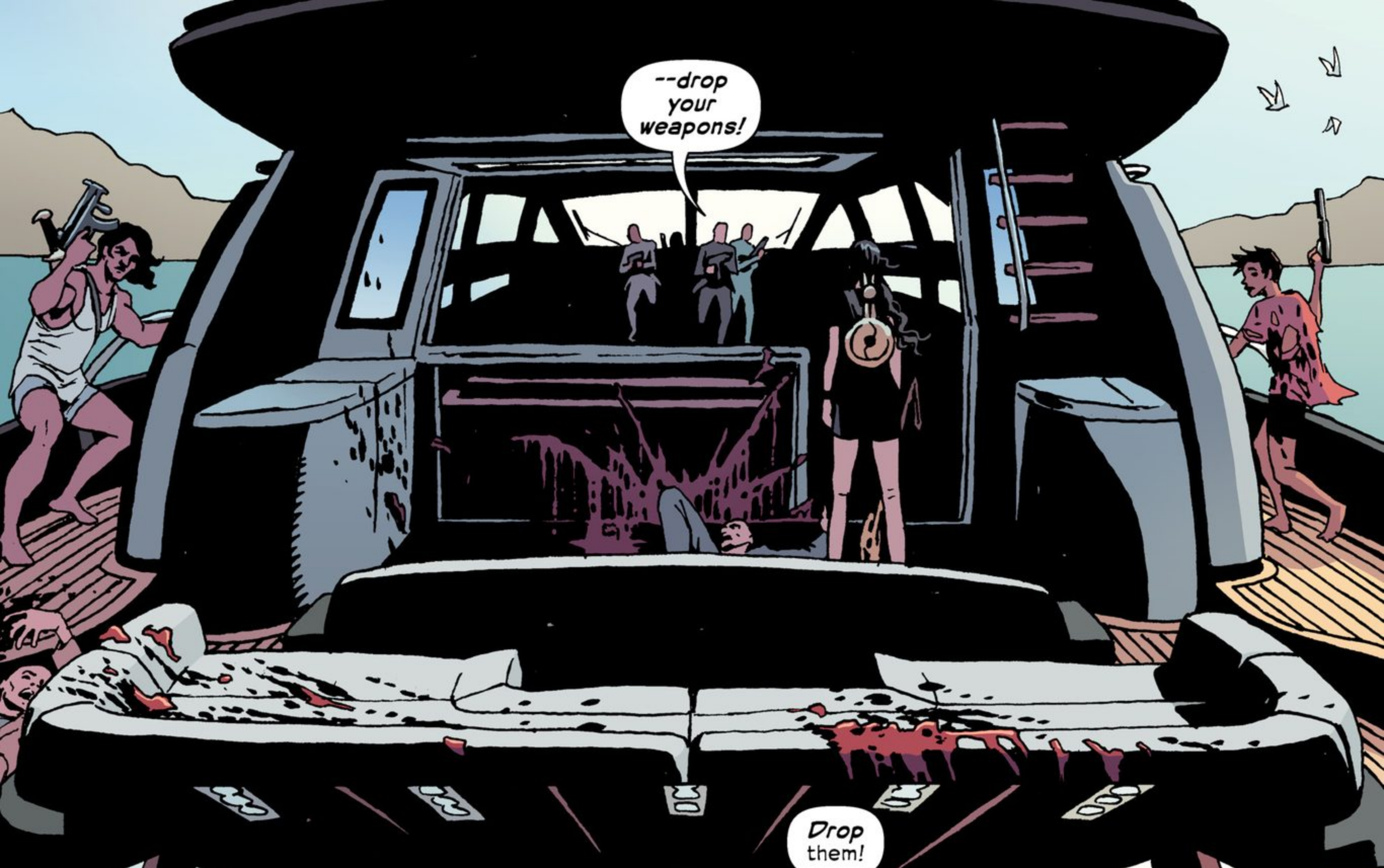
Sir! This
is a *private*
vessel--

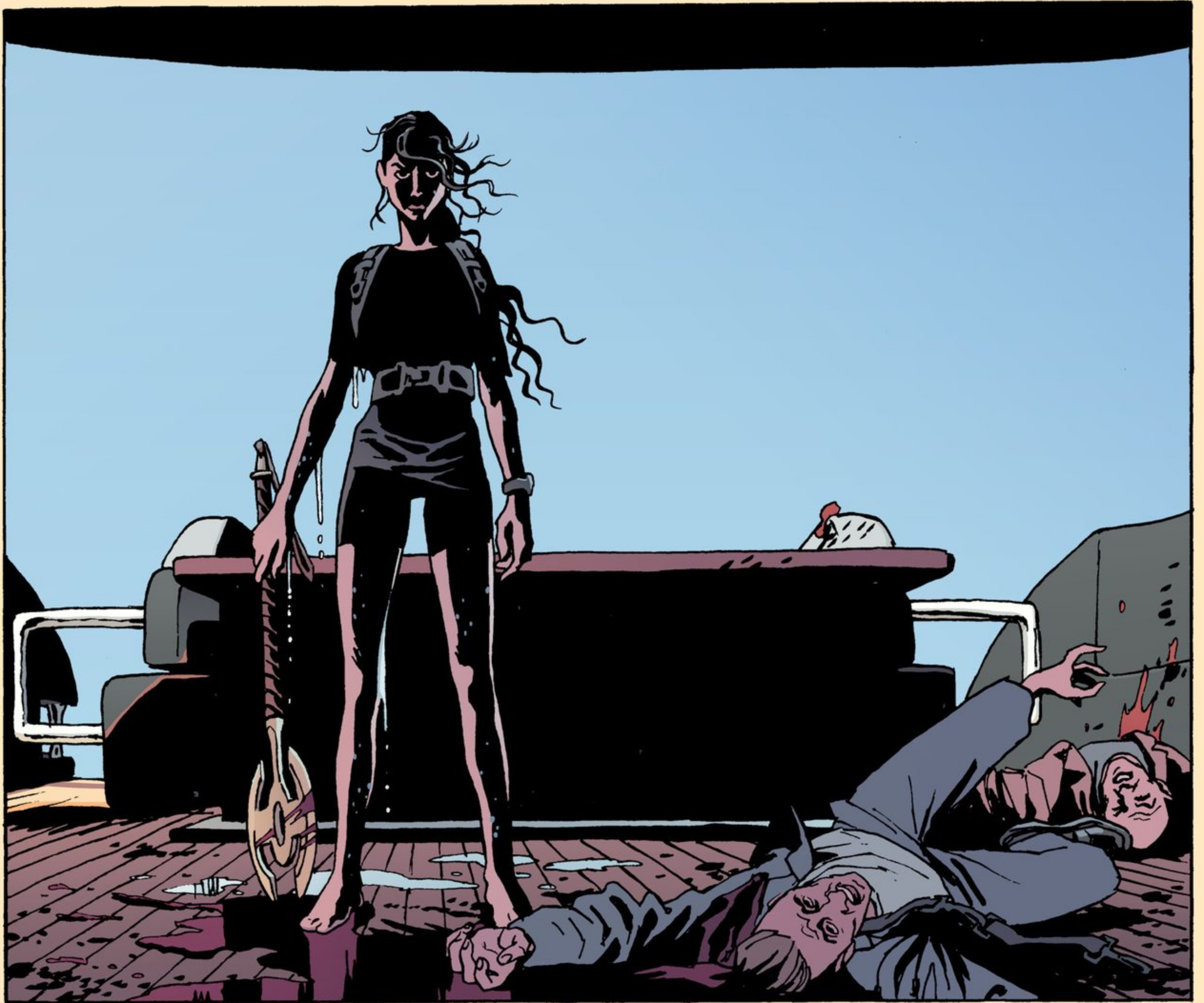














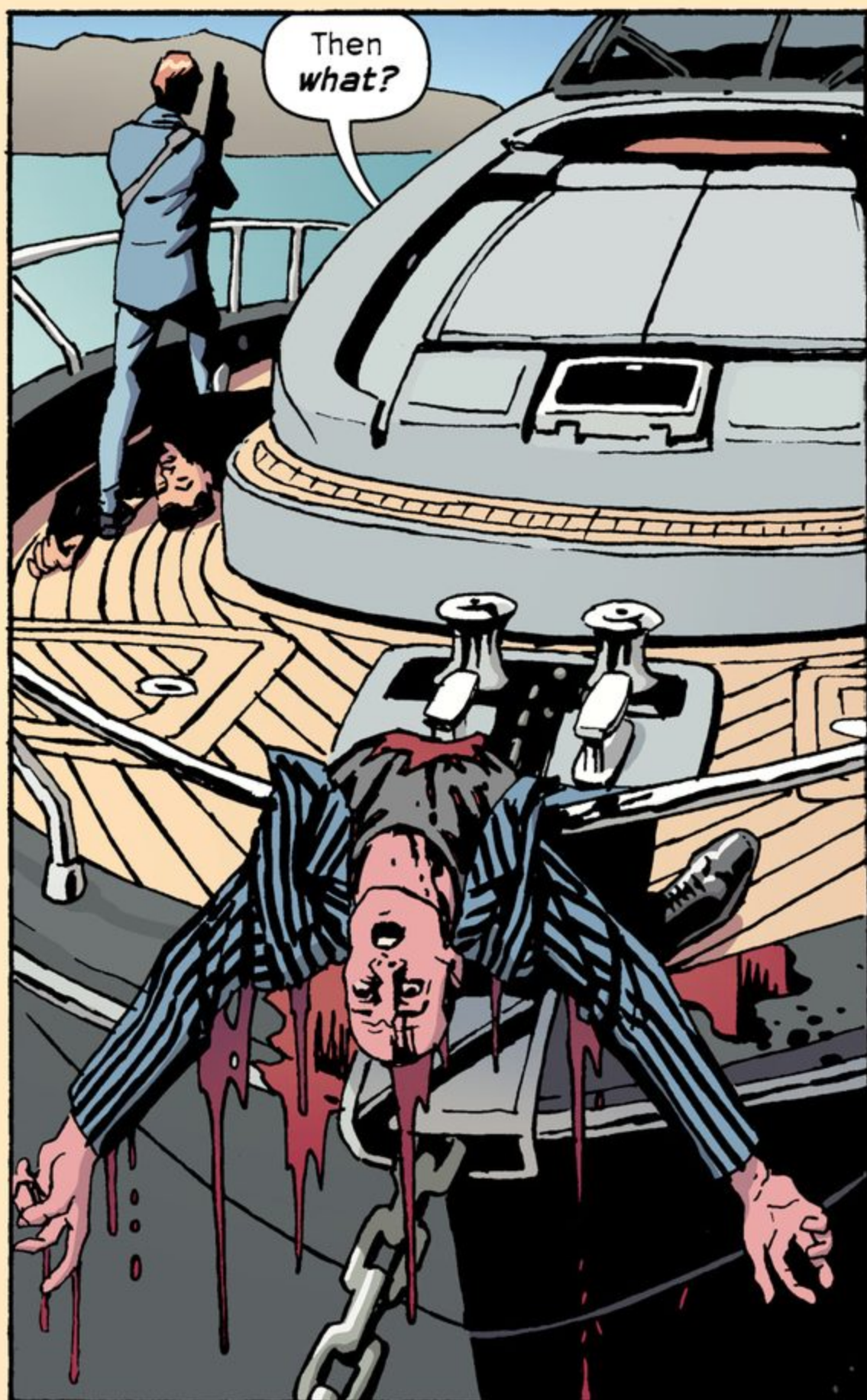


Jesus Christ, Andy.



You wanted me to give them a *spanking* and send them to *bed* without *supper*?

Of course *not*!



Then *what*?



Andy, you took them *apart*!

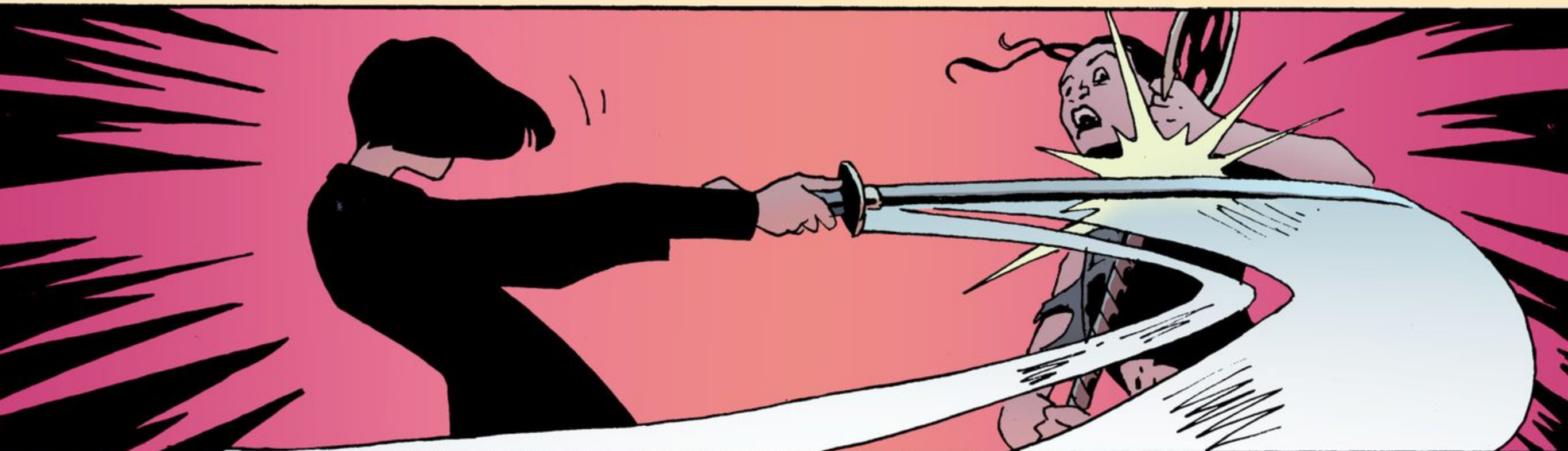
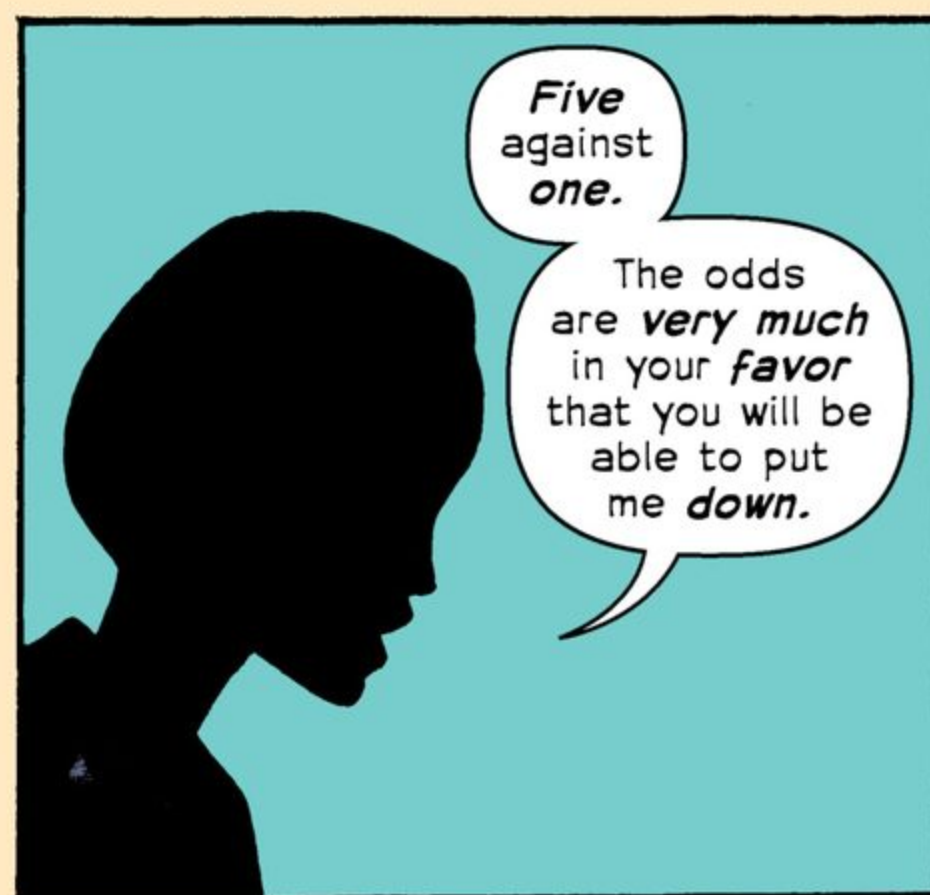


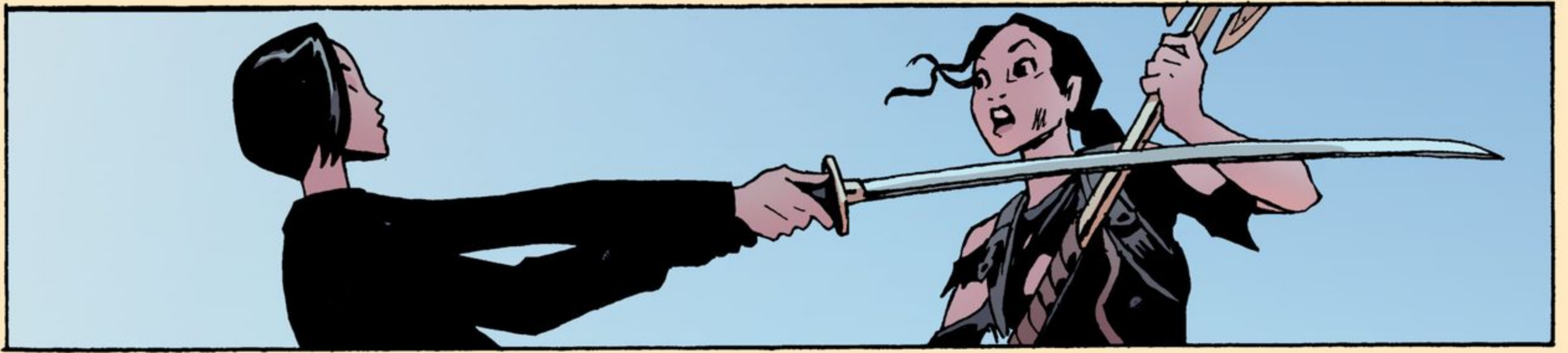
This... this *isn't* like you.

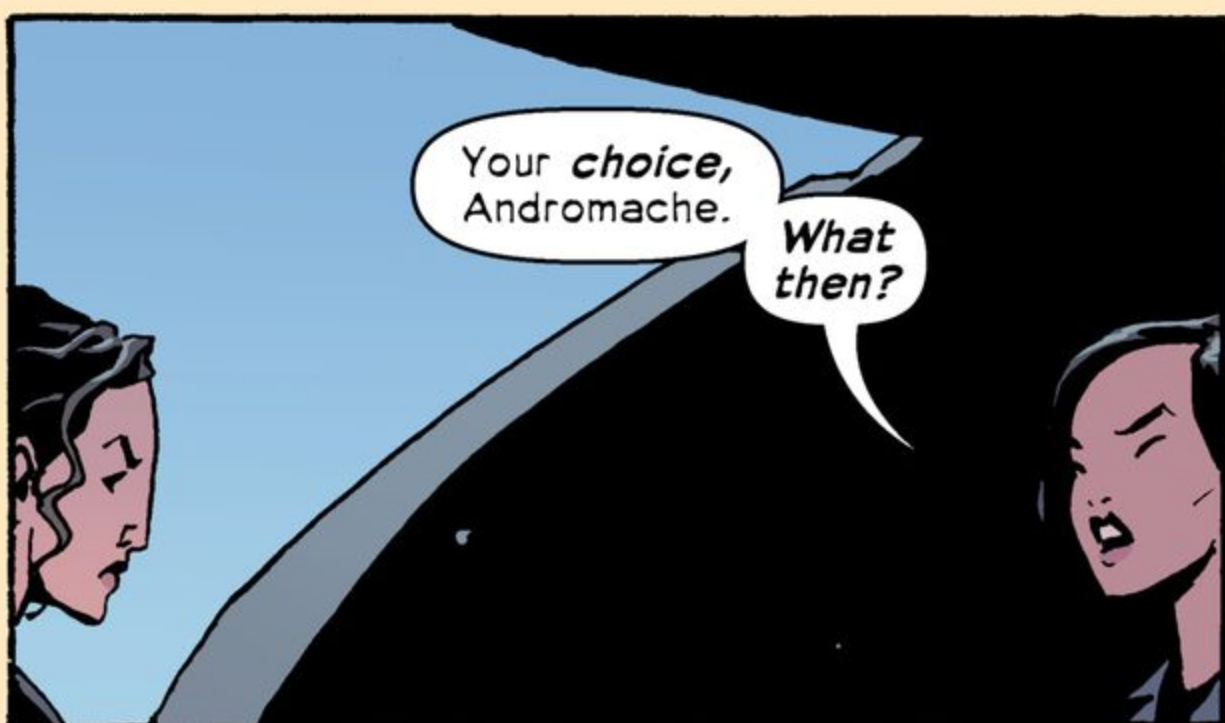
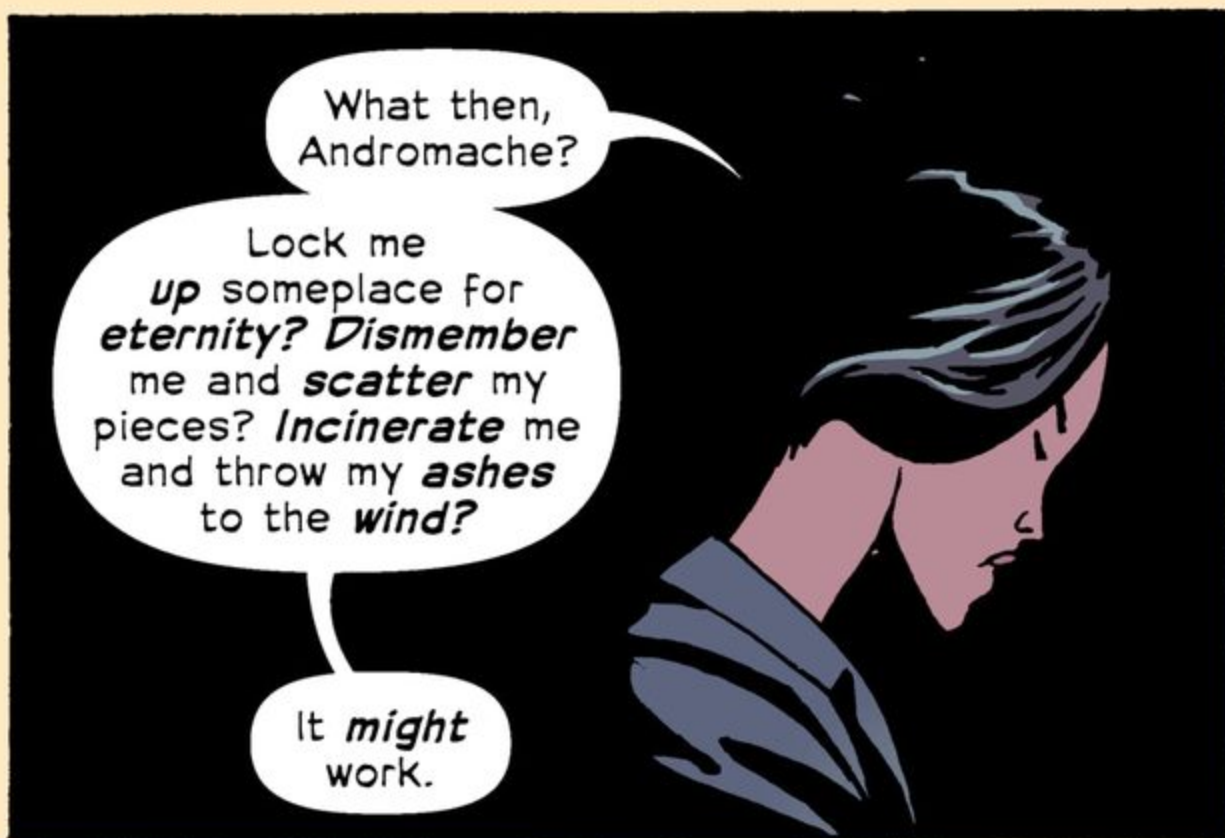


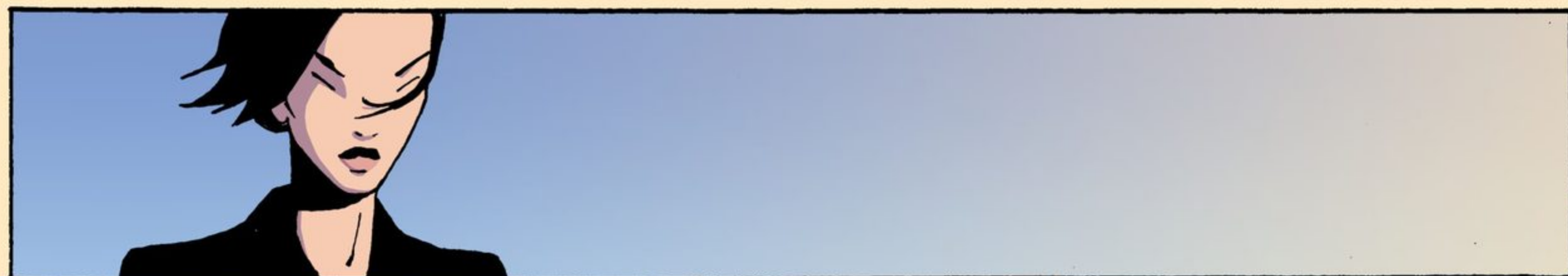
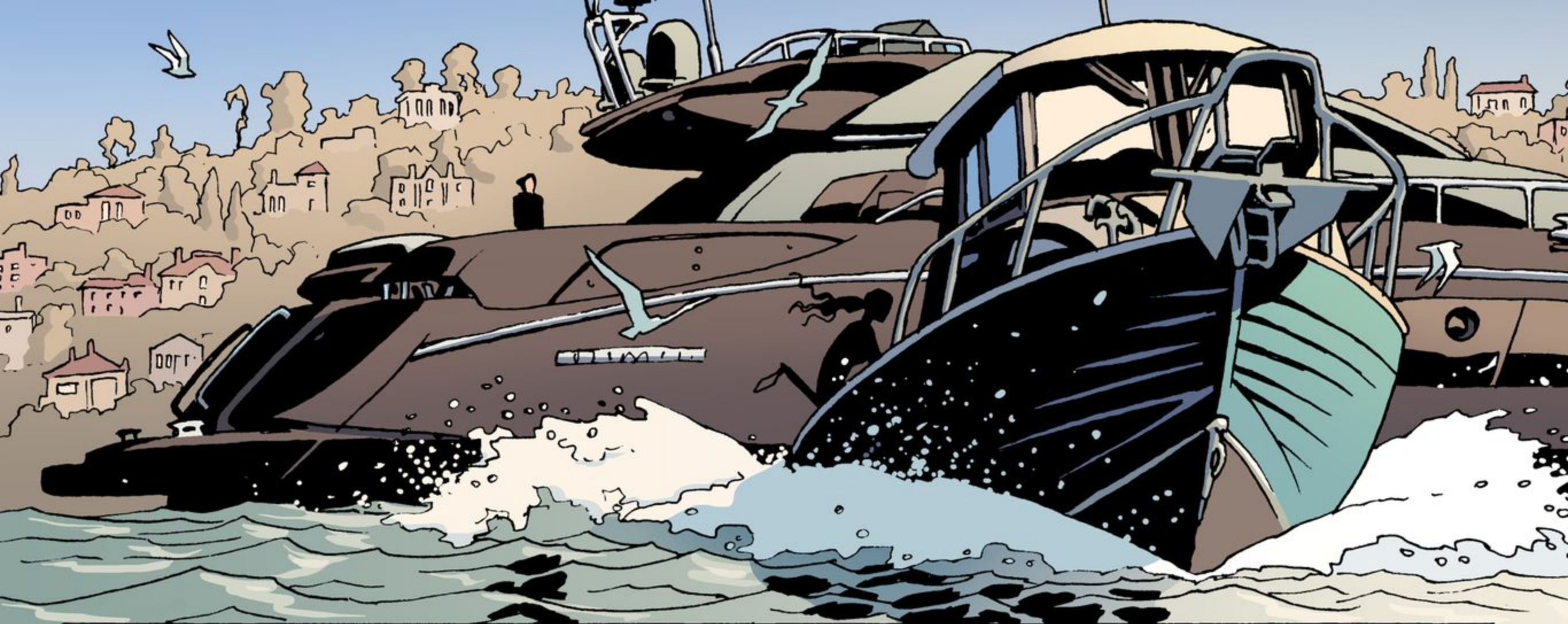
Maybe you don't *know* me, Nile.











"Mon Dieu--"



--j'ai
faim!



Your *old*
friend Noriko *barely*
fed me.



Not *my* friend,
man. Not sure she's
anybody's friend,
anymore.

Her hospitality
did leave a lot to
be desired.



Thank
you for coming
to get me.



Thank
James.

He knew
where we could
find you.

Then to your
health, Monsieur
Copley...



...may it be *good*
and serve you for *many*
years to come!

I was just
trying to
make *right*.



He made
up some ground
today, then.

Agreed.



You gonna tell me what's going on?

C'mon, Andy. Joe and I **saw** what happened on the yacht.

Nothing's going on.



You took those guys out **hard** and I gotta say, it kinda looked like you were **digging** it.

You been in a **shit** mood since Noriko showed up. Since **before**, if I'm honest.

The way you took out the **sentries** on that container ship, it's like you've got a **mad** on.



I think you owe us an **explanation**.

What's Law Two Hundred and Eighty-Two, Andy?

I'm going **out--**



What?



Noriko was **waiting** for me this morning when I left Mustafa's place--

Wait, you--

--she wanted to have a little **chat** with me and I told her to **soak** herself.



She says you're *not* who you *seem*. She says there's *shit* you haven't *told* me.

She says I should ask you about *Law Two Hundred and Eighty-Two*.

So I'm *asking*.



It's the *Code of Hammurabi*.



The *eye* for an *eye* guy?

Yeah, that was... one-ninety-six, I think. There were two hundred and eighty-two, total.

I used to know them all.



They weren't the *first* laws, but they were... it was *all* of Babylonia, you understand? There'd never been anything *like* it before.

They were a *big* deal, that's what I'm saying.

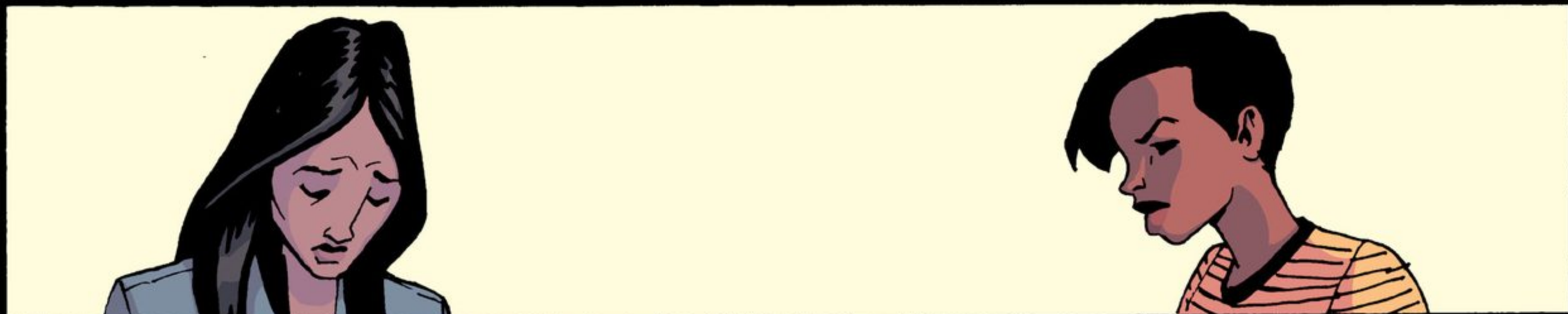


And the *last* law? Which one was that one?



"If a slave has said to his master, 'You are *not* my master,' he shall be brought to account as his slave...

"...and his master shall *cut* off his *ear*."



Which were *you*?

Nile...

I mean, I *know*, but I want to hear you *say* it.



It was a *long* time ago--

I want to hear you *say* it, Andy!



Fucking *say* it!



It's the way the world *was*, Nile.

BULLSHIT! It's a fucking *crime* against *humanity*!

You knew it was *wrong*! It has never *not* been *wrong*!



OF *COURSE* I *KNEW*!



You think I'm a *good* guy? I'm a fucking *killer*, Nile!

That's what this *curse of immortality* has *made* me! It's given me *seven millennia* to *practice*! I am a goddamn *god* of *war*--



"--I was *born* to it, *baptized* in it! Can you even *conceive* of how *old* I am?"

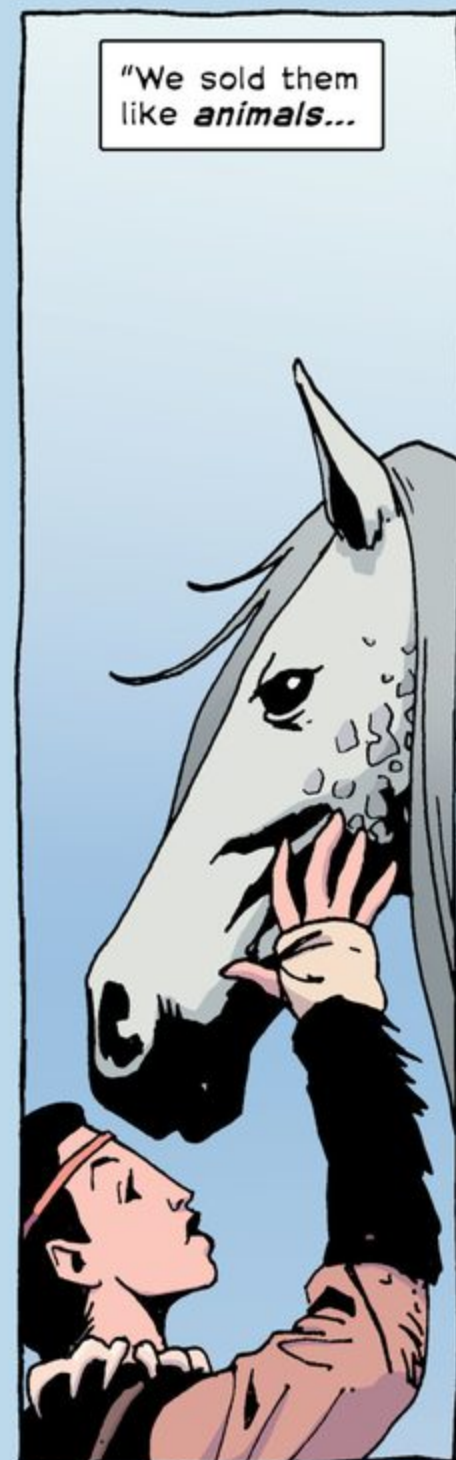
"I fought my first battle when I was fourteen, fifteen! And you *know* what we did *after*? When we had *won*?"

"What do you think we did with the *prisoners*? Did you think we just let them *go*?"

"Sorry you lost and didn't get to *rape* and *murder* us, hey, no hard feelings?' 'Off you go, don't do it again'?"

"Should we have *executed* them, instead?"

"So we *sold* them. For things we didn't *have*, things we didn't know how to *make*."



"We sold them like *animals*..."



"...they were worth *less* than our horses..."



"...they weren't *people*..."



"...they weren't *anything*..."



"...that's the way it *was*, it was the *world* I lived in, and I'm living in it *still*..."



...and **everyone** knows better and it goes on **anyway**. Even **now**, even **today**!

And you know **why**, Nile? You know **why** it's **still** around?

You know **why** they call it "human trafficking" instead of what it **is**?



Because people are **shit**.

At **best** they're **apathetic** but mostly they're **selfish** and **evil**. So they change the **name** and pretend it's a **different** problem.

People are fucking **vermin**.



And so am **I**.



And I don't want to fight it anymore.







Then you're
part of the
problem.

And from what
you've said--hell,
from the way you've
been *acting*--you
know that, too.



Right,
we're moving
out.

We got *work*
to do, and we aren't
doing it *here*.

Booker, help
Joe get everything
packed up...



...Nicky, you and
Copley get us clean
transport.





I don't want to be alone.



Please.



Then come with us.



I said before, it all catches up with you in the end.



*Every mistake,
every sin,
every crime.*



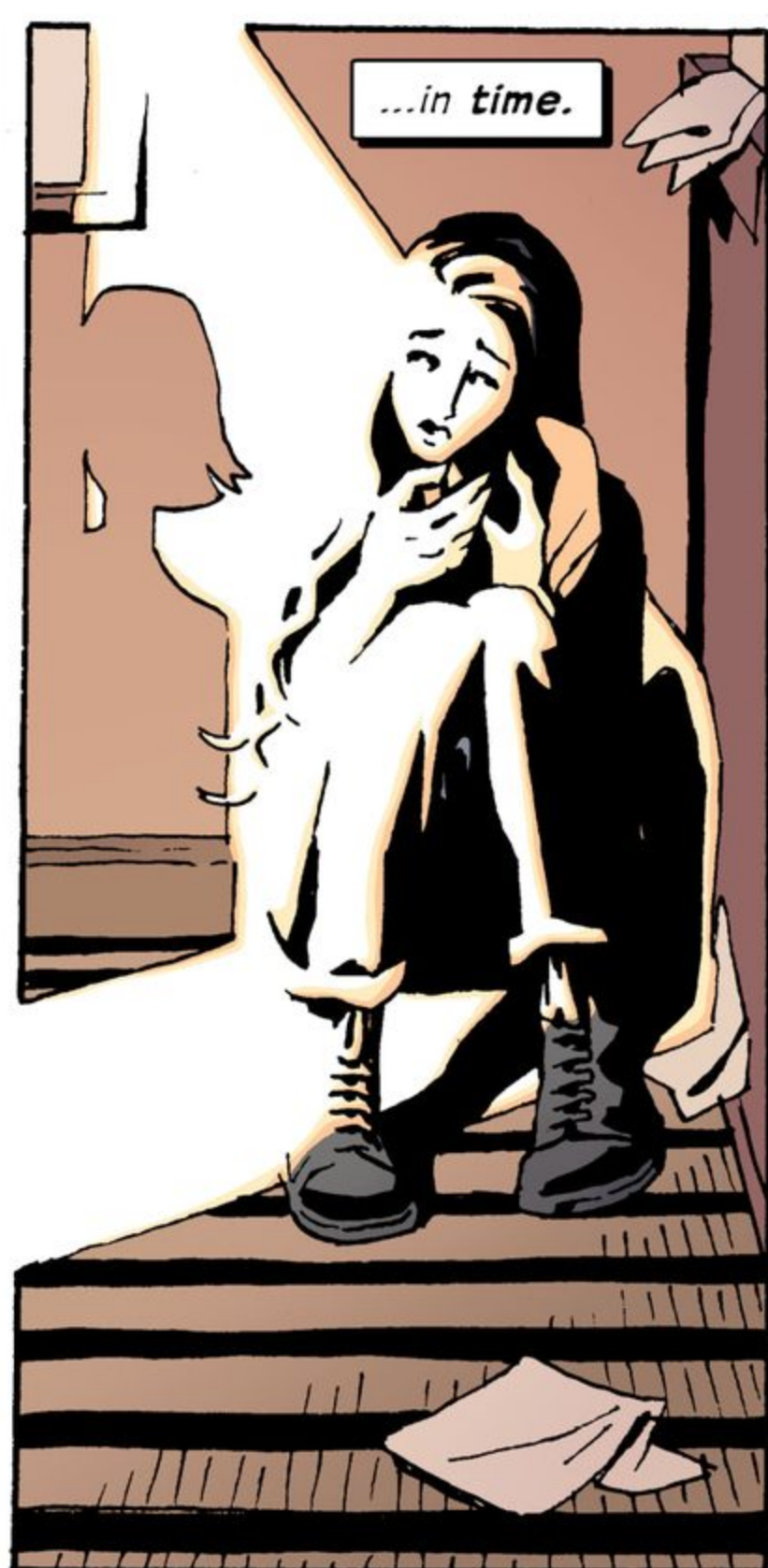
*It all finds you,
no matter how
far you run...*



...in space...



...in time.



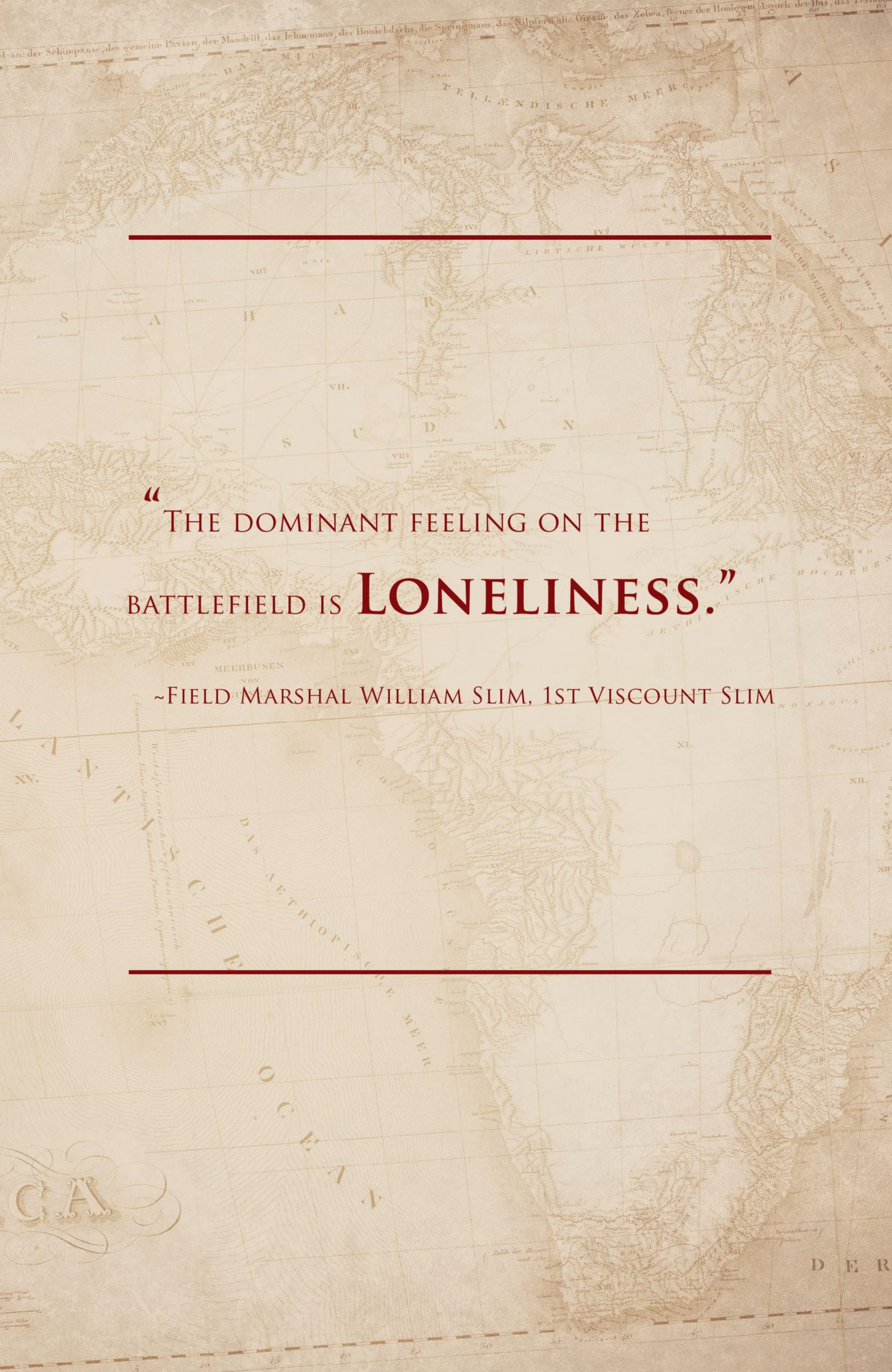


They
left you.



They
did.





“THE DOMINANT FEELING ON THE
BATTLEFIELD IS **LONELINESS.**”

~FIELD MARSHAL WILLIAM SLIM, 1ST VISCOUNT SLIM



THE OLD GUARD
WILL RETURN...

...ONE

LAST

TIME.

THE OLD GUARD™ FADE AWAY



LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ



LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ

“THE OLD GUARD delves into the lasting trauma of war through the experience of characters who can never stop fighting.”—THE AV CLUB

THIS IS A FAIRY TALE OF BLOOD AND BULLETS.

*It is a story about time, and age, and ages,
and about friendship, and love, and regret.*

It is a story of three women and three men who cannot die.

Mostly.

Their names are Andy, Noriko, Nicky, Joe, Booker, and Nile.

*For a long time, there was just Andy. Then Andy met Noriko.
The others came along later. And then, Noriko drowned—or so they thought.*

*Nile joined them. Booker left them. And Noriko’s suffering
has given her quite a dim view of humanity. It’s all too much for a
young immortal like Nile to handle.*

This is what happens next...

Eisner-winning writer **GREG RUCKA** (*LAZARUS*, *BLACK MAGICK*, *Lois Lane*) and critically acclaimed artist **LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ** (*American Carnage*, *Deadpool*, *Punisher: MAX*) continue the story of *THE OLD GUARD*, now a smash hit motion picture starring Charlize Theron and KiKi Layne.

“A genuine spectacle.”—VULTURE

*“Tight and frenetic with characters worth caring about. One of the best of its kind.”
—THE BRAZEN BULL*

*“Greg Rucka is very good at writing his immortals.”
—MULTIVERSITY COMICS*

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